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ABSTRACT

U.S. Secretary of Education, William J. Bennett, expressed concerns about the condition of U.S. education in the areas of content, character, and choice. This document comprises the papers of 12 scholars on the public policy and the research implications of this theme. Three addresses were given on the issue of content by Russell Kirk, Thomas Fleming, and Paul Vitz. Kirk proposed that the two fundamental purposes of education are the cultivation of wisdom and virtue and the teaching of responsibility and opportunity in a civil social order. Fleming suggested that it is a mistake to think of the present debate as a backlash against plummeting test scores. Vitz discussed his study of the role given to religion and traditional values in the basal readers and social studies texts used in U.S. schools. Papers by Joseph Adelson, Joel J. Kupperman, Richard A. Baer, Jr., and William Kirk Kilpatrick addressed the issue of character. Adelson argues that the paradigms by which the social sciences study the realities of human existence may be derived from ideological preoccupations of the times. Choice in education is discussed by William B. Ball, Mary Anne Raywid, Thomas Ascik, Michael Casserly, and Robert L. Woodson. Raywid outlines her research findings on "Success Dynamics of Public Schools of Choice," and Ascik examines the arguments attributed to opponents of choice in education. (SM)

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CONTENT, CHARACTER AND CHOICE IN SCHOOLING:

PUBLIC POLICY AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

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Proceedings of a
Symposium

Sponsored by the
National Council on
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PREFACE

It was a major moment in contemporary American education when shortly after becoming Secretary of Education, William Bennett chose to emphasize the "Three C's"—Content, Character and Choice. Since these three concepts were placed on the national agenda, we at the Education Department have sought to promote serious and thoughtful discussion of the many important issues associated with each of them. I was therefore pleased when the National Council on Educational Research organized this conference in April on "Content, Character and Choice in Schooling: Public Policy and Research Implications." I'm further gratified by the Council's decision to publish these papers representing the core of what transpired at the conference.

Let me remind readers that the Council is an entirely independent body. Its members are appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, for statutory terms of office; they provide valued advice and counsel to us in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement and well beyond. NCER members set their own agenda and, in the case of a conference such as this, decide whom to invite and how to arrange the proceedings. That they chose to examine the three C's is all the more reason for us at the Department to applaud the Council's work.

The conference itself was uncommonly interesting and generated useful discussion. It was by no means without controversy, but any good conference ought to be a lively affair that provides for argument and that challenges peoples' thinking rather than just reinforcing prior notions.

These papers are engaging, provocative and worthwhile. I can't think of anyone who will agree with each thought in every essay, but this is all the more reason to read them! This collection is an important contribution to the national conversation about the three C's, and I commend it to the reader.

Chester E. Finn, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for
Educational Research and Improvement
and Counselor to the Secretary
August 18, 1986

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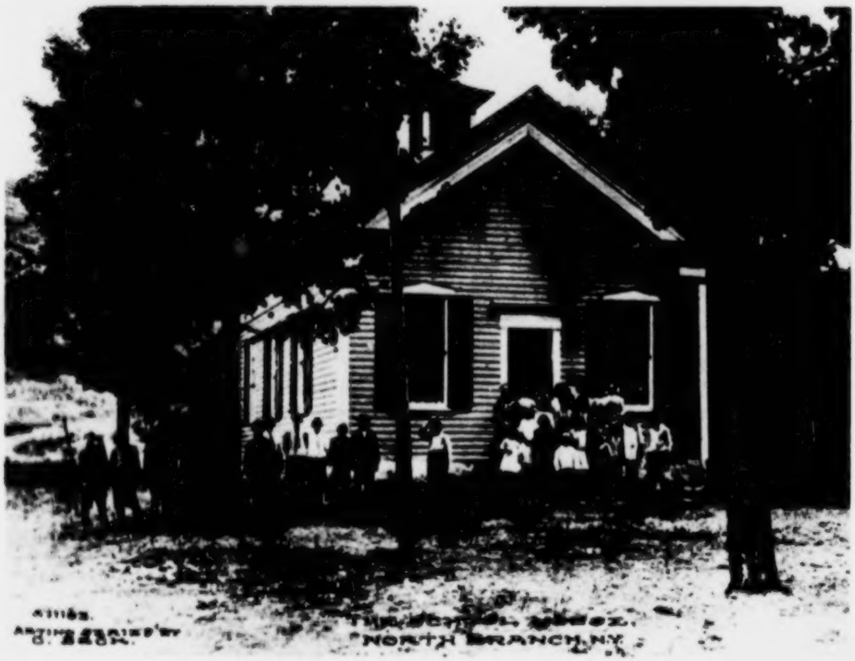
NORTH BRANCH, N.Y.

The School House, North Branch, New York.
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INTRODUCTION

Extending the Debate

In a landmark address shortly after his confirmation as U.S. Secretary of Education, William J. Bennett focused a widely diffused concern about the condition of American education into a threefold channel of Content, Character and Choice; and in so doing, he invited policy makers and all who are charged with improving our schools to examine deeper and more philosophical questions about the nature and purpose of education in a pluralistic society.

The National Council on Educational Research, an official body composed of 15 members appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, the mission of which is to advise the Secretary on policies and priorities for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, desiring to advance the ongoing debate begun by the Secretary on the philosophical foundations of American education, invited 12 outstanding authorities on contemporary educational theory and practice to address the Council and the public in a one day symposium on the public policy and research implications of the overall theme of Content, Character and Choice in Schooling. This gathering took place on April 24, 1986, in the Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C.

The Council is gratified to have had the cooperation of Secretary Bennett and Assistant Secretary for OERI Chester E. Finn, Jr., in conducting the symposium. The Council is further gratified by the extraordinary depth and range of the papers and lectures that were delivered at the symposium, and hopes that through dissemination of these Proceedings a larger public will have the opportunity to share their timely and provocative insights.

Considering Content

The question of what shall be taught in our nation's schools is one that has been for the most part insufficiently examined by the plethora of study groups and blue ribbon panels which have examined American education in recent years. What is taught in the schools quite naturally derives from what is perceived as the purpose of education. In discussing "Traditions of Thought and the Core Curriculum," Russell Kirk posits as the two fundamental purposes of education the cultivation of wisdom and virtue in the human person for the person's own sake, and the teaching of young people their duties and opportunities in a civil social order.

Words such as *wisdom, virtue, character* and *values,* which have been invoked many times by critics and reformers of education and likewise by defenders of the status quo, all have various meanings as they are refracted through differing traditions of thought, e.g., idealism, rationalism, and materialism. These disparate traditions have in their turn influenced the educators, philosophers and psychologists who have had a major impact on American schools, especially in the last four or five decades. The study of the role of philosophy and how it has shaped both teacher training and pedagogical practice would seem to provide a fruitful line of future research.

In his presentation, "The Roots of American Culture: Reforming the Curriculum," Thomas Fleming suggests it is a mistake to think of the present debate as simply a backlash against plummeting test scores and the psychological fads of the '60's and '70's. He argues against the notion that all we need to do is return to "basics" as we knew them in the 1950's, since the cultural consensus of the 1950's was more apparent than real. As Fleming puts it, "When a society decides to quarrel over education, it may be that the parties to the dispute are really talking not so much about books and disciplines as they are advocating rival visions of human life."

The subject of "rival visions of human life" was explicitly addressed by Paul Vitz, who discussed his study of the role given to religious and traditional values in the basal readers and social studies textbooks most widely used in American public schools and found a form of censorship by omission in these extremely influential publications. Vitz's study has been widely mentioned in the media and has stimulated a nascent appraisal of the role of the textbook in imparting or in failing to impart the deeper values of society.

Character

In his discussion of "The Death of Personality Theory and What It Meant for the Study of Character," Joseph Adelson argues that the paradigms by which the social sciences study the realities of human existence may be more readily derived from the ideological preoccupations of the day than from what is intrinsic to human nature. He cites in particular the neglect of important studies of human personality which demonstrate its relatively stable structure over time.

Joel J. Kupperman contends that character formation in human beings is grounded in their ability to make choices. In this paper, "The Education of Character as the Integration of Choice," Kupperman holds that human character is "more than a matter of chance, hormones and the weather," and in fact involves the integration of choices in a sustained pattern over time.

Richard A. Baer, Jr., raises the important consideration of accommodating differing ethical and moral systems in his paper, "Character Education and Public Schools: The Question of Context." Given the differing views about the meaning of character and visions of life upon which character is founded, the important decisions about how the character of one's own children should be formed should rest with the parents primarily, rather than with the state.

William Kirk Kilpatrick discusses "The Use of Literature in Character Formation," and deplores the displacement of stories by moral dilemmas and values clarification, which has had the effect of emphasizing the process of choice rather than the moral content of the choice itself. Stories, on the other hand, reflect the rationality and the will of the human person. The larger question of how art and literature affect human behavior and standards of behavior has yet to be definitively answered, but as a question that has preoccupied some of the greatest thinkers of generations of humanity, it should not be disregarded as irrelevant by our own.

Choice in Schooling

William B. Ball in his address, "Choice and Constitutional Questions," takes note of the great diversity that exists in state courts regarding the rights of parents to educate their children. Some state courts have upheld freedom of parental choice while others have upheld licensing of private schools under "broadly repressive statutes." Mr. Ball has challenged the claims of the state that certification practices are necessary for high educational standards.

Mary Anne Raywid outlines her research findings on "Success Dynamics of Public Schools of Choice." She finds choice to be a liberating phenomenon which has the added advantages of personalizing schooling and affirming the individuality of students. The benefits of choice redound to the school as well, freeing schools from bureaucratic controls and enabling them to perceive and respond to opportunities for change.

Thomas Ascik examines the arguments attributed to opponents of choice in education, i.e., that poor and disadvantaged parents may not be capable of making wise choices of schools for their children.

But he notes that public policy permits these same people to make judgments about which health care providers they will choose for themselves and their children. Further research on the dynamics of choice might illuminate why it is that some parents of limited means have opted for private education even without the benefit of a voucher.

Michael Casserly discounts the view that vouchers would destroy public education and that disadvantaged parents would not make wise choices. On the topic of "Chapter One Vouchers: The Illusion of Choice," he makes a case against vouchers, but maintains that public schools are fully able to compete with private schools to win the patronage of the public.

Robert L. Woodson rounds out the discussion on choice by affirming the right, duty and ability of poor parents to make the same determination about their children's education that middle class parents routinely make about theirs. He urges us all to take the widest possible view of "Educational Options for the Disadvantaged."

—Onalee McGraw
Symposium Coordinator

"Content, Character and Choice in Schooling: Public Policy and Research Implications," a symposium sponsored by the National Council on Educational Research was funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement under Contract #400-85-1007 (DO OERI-D-86-0111). The views expressed by the authors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Council on Educational Research or the U.S. Department of Education.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Russell Kirk has been professor or distinguished visiting professor at several universities and colleges. He is the author of 23 books and several hundred periodical essays on political thought, educational theory, ethical questions and social themes. He holds the degree of doctor of letters from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, and has been hailed as one of the founders of the conservative movement in the United States.

Thomas Fleming is the editor of *The Chronicles of Culture*. He holds a PhD in classics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is a widely published essayist and is the author of numerous articles in scholarly journals. He is editor of *Why the South Will Survive*.

Paul Vitz is professor of psychology at New York University. He holds a PhD in psychology from Stanford University. He is the author of *Psychology as Religion: the Cult of Self Worship; Modern Art and Modern Science: the Parallel Analysis of Vision;* and *Sigmund Freud's Christian Unconscious*.

Joseph Adelson is professor of psychology and supervising psychologist at the Psychological Clinic at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He holds MA and PhD degrees from the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of a textbook, *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* (1980), and of *Inventing Adolescence* (1986).

Joel J. Kupperman is professor of philosophy at the University of Connecticut. A graduate of the University of Chicago and Cambridge University, he has been a visiting fellow at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. His books include *Ethical Knowledge* (1970) and *The Foundations of Morality* (1983).

Richard A. Baer, Jr., is a director of a program in Agriculture and Environmental Ethics at Cornell University. He is a member of the Graduate Field of Education at Cornell, and holds a PhD from Harvard University in the history and philosophy of religion. He has published widely in the fields of education, religion and values.

William Kirk Kilpatrick is professor of education at Boston College. He is the author of three books exploring the influence of psychology on contemporary culture: *Identity and Intimacy* (1975), *Psychological Seduction* (1983), and *The Emperor's New Clothes* (1985), and of numerous articles in scholarly journals and journals of opinion. He was recently awarded a fellowship by the National Endowment for the Humanities to study the relationship between moral imagination and moral growth.

William Bentley Ball is a partner in the firm of Ball & Skelly, in Harrisburg, Pa. A constitutional lawyer who has been lead counsel in litigations in 22 states and in the Supreme Court of the United States, including the landmark *Wisconsin v. Yoder,* he has lectured and debated widely on issue's of educational freedom and constitutional law. He is a graduate of Western Reserve University and the College of Law, University of Notre Dame.

Mary Anne Raywid is professor of education at Hofstra University, where she also chairs the Department of Administration and Policy Studies, and directs the Center for the Study of Educational Alternatives. She has been associated with the excellence movement as both contributor and analyst, and has a longstanding interest in educational reform. For about a decade she has been a scholar advocate of schools of choice. She holds a PhD in Foundations of Education from the University of Illinois.

Thomas Ascik is executive director of The Clearinghouse on Educational Choice and editor of its monthly newsletter. Formerly a teacher of English, he has also served as Director of Planning and Program Development of the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education. He has been a policy analyst for the Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education, and for the Heritage Foundation. He is a graduate of St. John's College, Annapolis, and the George Mason University School of Law.

Michael Casserly is the director of legislation and research for the Council of Great City Schools in Washington, D.C. He holds a PhD from the University of Maryland, and is the author of a book on school crime.

Robert L. Woodson is president of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, chairman of the Council for a Black Economic Agenda and an adjunct fellow at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. He has directed a number of national and local community development programs and has published widely on the subject of urban policy. He frequently lectures in colleges and universities and appears on television and radio talk shows. He serves on the President's Advisory Council on Private Sector Initiatives and on the boards of the Rockford Institute and the Corporation for Enterprise Development. He is a graduate of Cheyney State College, and holds an MSW from the University of Pennsylvania.

CONSIDERING CONTENT

The aim of education is to dispel error and discover truth.

—*Socrates*

Education is an ornament to the fortunate, a haven of refuge to the unfortunate.

—*Democritus*

TRADITIONS OF THOUGHT AND THE CORE CURRICULUM

Russell Kirk

There exists a central tradition of learning which has nurtured and sustained our civilization. In recent times we have endeavored to ignore that tradition. From this sin of omission, among others, we find ourselves in grave intellectual and moral difficulties, private and public.

I do not mean to claim overmuch for formal education. In its original signification, the word "education" seems to have meant a kind of peripatetic and casual instruction, given to a child by a person assigned to lead that child outdoors for a walk; and a "pedagogue" appears to have been, in classical times, of a condition not much higher than that of a male nannie, fit for naught but imparting some rudiments of learning to the little boy who strolled beside him, hand in hand.

I commence my remarks in this disparaging fashion because nowadays many folk abase themselves before the image of Holy Educationism. We are informed by this cult's publicists that a barbarism inferior to the culture of the old Mongols would descend upon America, should a teachers' strike endure more than a fortnight; we are warned by voices more doom-filled than Cassandra's that should the federal government reduce its expenditures upon loans to college students, posterity would curse us for having blasted forever the works of the imperial intellect. You may surmise that I suspect the presence of charlatans in the numerous temples of Holy Educationism.

So when we discuss the passing of a cultural tradition from generation to generation, age to age, we need to remind ourselves that the school is but one of the instruments employed in this complex task. Social customs loom larger than does formal schooling in the perpetuation of any culture—even so elaborate a culture as ours has become. The family, too, matters more than does the school in this labor: which is a reason why the thriving of family life ought to take precedence over expansion of the frontiers of the Educationist Empire. Much of a culture is transmitted by training, as distinguished from education—that is, by apprenticeship, internship, and learning-by-doing. If by "education" we imply the maintenance of regular schools and a formal curriculum, it is possible for a culture to dispense altogether with education. But our own high and complex culture could not survive without an apparatus of schools; nor can those schools accomplish their work satisfactorily unless they develop and protect and renew sound curricula.

With this hard truth in mind, I propose to describe the two chief purposes of a curriculum—purposes that have been recognized from at least as early as the sixth century before Christ—and then to suggest our present problems with these educational traditions.

One of the two primary reasons why civilized societies establish school curricula is the need for cultivating a measure of wisdom and virtue in the human person, for the person's own sake. This fixed course of study is intended to develop good character, moral imagination, and right reason.

The other primary reason why civilized societies establish school curricula is the need for developing social conformity—that is, for teaching young people their duties and their opportunities in a civil social order, so that the community may survive and prosper. This fixed course of study is intended to develop civic responsibility and love of neighbor and country.

Now these two ends or objectives are coordinate, rather than opposed: if the order of the soul suffers, the order of the commonwealth decays; or if the order of the commonwealth falls into confusion, the order of the soul is maintained with difficulty. In other words, the central tradition of true education provides a curriculum in which teaching for the sake of the individual person and teaching for the sake of the republic are interwoven.

Here in the United States, our patterns of instruction are derived principally from British and German experience, and more remotely from Roman and Greek examples. Those influences have been considerably modified, whether for good or for ill, by American social institutions, and by American educational doctrines popularized during the twentieth century. Until the middle of the present century, most Americans were complacent about the state of their public instruction. But since the Second World War, there has arisen widespread and vehement discontent with the results produced by our elaborate educational apparatus. Is something wrong with the typical American curriculum? Have we failed in our duty to sustain and develop the central traditions of learning?

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, indeed something is wrong with the typical American curriculum. Yes, we Americans have neglected the essentials of genuine education. Permit me first to discuss the decline of the curriculum with respect to the development of good character and moral imagination; and then to turn to the decline of the curriculum in its aspect of securing the social order.

• • •

In the American Republic, the rising generation are not wards of the state. Parents are the initial teachers, and boys and girls are schooled so that they may be enabled to develop into full human beings—not merely so that they may serve the state. This educational concern for the individual, the person, needs emphasis in our time; for much of the "professional" writing about schools, during recent decades, has assumed that citizenship is almost everything, and that the state always has an overriding interest in educational undertakings. Ours is not a totalist political order, nevertheless; and the fact that we support public schools does not signify that the political authority may do as it likes with the minds and consciences of young people.

I do not mean to deny the importance of social conformity or cooperation as a major goal, to be incorporated in a sound curriculum; rather, here I am reaffirming the healthy old American conviction that there is more to life than politics, and more to schooling than civics courses. Before inquiring as to what has gone wrong with the curriculum for the commonwealth, I am asking what has gone wrong with the curriculum for the person.

In the Great Tradition of true education, how have wisdom and virtue been cultivated in the young person? Why, chiefly through the study of a body of great literature. I do not mean to claim for humane letters an exclusive function here. For understanding the human condition in our time, a good apprehension of the discipline of physics, the most philosophical of sciences, is increasingly important, for instance. But my time as a speaker is limited; so I confine myself in today's remarks to literature as a path to wisdom and virtue.

Time was, within my own memory, when the prose and poetry taught in the typical American school, from the first grade through the twelfth, clearly retained an imaginatively ethical significance. It was meant to develop character and imagination through examples, precept, and an imagery conceived in noble minds. Consider the sixth-grade reader used in my own public school near the Detroit railroad yards, fifty-seven years ago. That manual was divided into three parts: "Nature—Home and Country"; "Stories of Greece and Rome"; and "Great American Authors." In Part I we had lengthy admirable selections about "the world of nature," in effect opening eyes to the wonder of creation, from Theodore Roosevelt, Samuel White Baker, Captain Mayne Reid, John James Audubon, Ralph Waldo Emerson, James Russell Lowell, and other worthies; also in Part I a section concerned with "home and country," in the spirit of Edmund Burke's aphorism "For us to love our country, our country ought to be lovely," and consisting of selections from Irving, Dickens, Tennyson, Lanier, Leigh Hunt, Ruskin *(The King of the Golden River,* a prime favorite in such anthologies until recent decades), Cardinal Mercier (whose inclusion would be denounced nowadays by the American Civil Liberties Union), Lincoln, Browning, and others.

Part II of our sixth-grade textbook consisted of long extracts from the *Iliad,* the *Odyssey,* and the *Aeneid,* in the prose versions of A. J. Church. Part III included several selections apiece from Benjamin Franklin, William Cullen Bryant, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Nathaniel Hawthorne, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Such readings, intelligently commented upon by very competent teachers, woke our young minds to wonder and imparted some notion of what it is to be fully human—to attain the dignity of a man, a little lower than the angels.

Need I contrast such literary instruction with the sixth-grade "English lit" materials of the typical public school of 1986? With the selections founded upon "contemporary relevance" and "compassion" and "social significance" nowadays? Does the typical sixth-grade anthology of 1986 warm the heart, wake the moral imagination, train the emotions? Indeed, how many teachers of literature in 1986 have been trained with a view toward those functions?

I hope that many people present here today have read C. S. Lewis' moving little book *The Abolition of Man.* Its subject is the study of literature in primary and secondary schools. "Without the aid of trained emotions," Lewis writes, "the intellect is powerless against the animal organism." He finds that dry-as-dust school anthologies of a certain recent type are imprisoning young people in "contemporaneity" and in an arid pseudo-rationalism and in vague sociological generalizations. "And all the time," Lewis continues, "—such is the tragi-comedy of our situation—we continue to clamor for those very qualities we are rendering impossible. You can hardly open a periodical without coming across the statement that what our civilization needs is more 'drive,' or dynamism, or self-sacrifice, or 'creativity.' In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful."

So it is with us Americans now, forty years since Lewis wrote. I have been saying this, in substance: the purpose of humane literature in the core curriculum is to help to maintain order in the human soul; to teach young people what it is to be fully human; to impart the cardinal virtues by the art of persuasion, not by exhortation merely. In recent years we have forgotten this tradition, coming to fancy instead that the functions of literary studies were merely to impart "communications skills" that might make money, and to supply some diversion in a workaday world. We even have acted upon the principle that it doesn't matter what the young person reads, so long as he is able to read something or other. The time has come for us to renew the study of literature as a source of good character, moral imagination, and right reason.

Now I am not arguing that literary knowledge can be made a satisfactory substitute for religious convictions—that point of view best expressed by Matthew Arnold. But neither can religious convictions of themselves insure good character, moral imagination, and right reason. Formal schooling cannot instill what Aristotle called "moral virtue"—that acquisition coming from good habits, formed chiefly in the family—but formal schooling can help much to develop what Aristotle called "intellectual virtue," the aspiration of Socrates and Plato. If we remind ourselves of how much the tradition of literary studies has accomplished, over the centuries, to transmit to the rising generation fortitude, prudence, temperance, justice, faith, hope, charity—why, we perceive afresh why reinvigorated courses in humane letters are indispensable to the core curriculum.

* * *

Permit me here a digression, that I may make clear my meaning. When I speak of the ethical character of humane letters as a part of the core curriculum, I most distinctly am not advocating a moralizing pedagogy that would employ courses in literature to indoctrinate the young in approved "values." Nowadays we hear a great deal about "teaching values" in schools. Although sincerely held by many people who mean well, this notion is a mistaken concept.

For what true education attempts to impart is *meaning*, not value.

This sly misemployment of the word "value" as a substitute for such words as "norm," "standard," "principle," and "truth" is the deliberate contrivance of the doctrinaire positivists, who deny that any moral significance of a transcendent or enduring character subsists. In America, the notion of educational "values" has been thrust forward by sociologists and educationists of the Instrumentalist school: it is intended as a substitute for the religious assumptions about human existence that formerly were taken for granted in schools. A "value," as educationists employ that unfortunate word, is a personal preference, gratifying perhaps to the person who holds it, but of no binding moral effect upon others. "Other things being equal, pushpin is as good as poetry," in Bentham's infamous phrase. Choose what values you will, or ignore the lot of them: it's a matter of what gives you, the individual, the most pleasure or the least pain.

Etienne Gilson points out that positivists deliberately advance the concept of "values" because they deny that words, or the concepts which words represent, possess real meaning. Thus the word "honor" may hold value for some, but may be repellent to other people: in the view of the positivist, the word "honor" is empty of real content, for there exists no honor, nor dishonor: all really is physical sensation, pleasure or pain. But if "honor" offers an illusory value for you, employ the word; or if you dislike "honor," discard it.

I lack time here to develop this point. Yet perhaps I have said enough to suggest that the positivists' concept of the word "value" distinctly is *not* part of that heritage or tradition of culture that some of us are struggling to maintain and to restore. Every school child used to be familiar with the catalogue of the seven cardinal virtues and the seven deadly sins. With a good many other folk today, the positivists deny the existence of those seven deadly sins, or of any sin. As for the virtues—why, they would like to convert those into "value preferences," with no moral imperative to back them.

Nevertheless, justice, fortitude, prudence, and temperance are not "values" merely; nor are faith, hope, and charity. It is not for the individual, cribbed in self-conceit, to determine whether he prefers justice or injustice; it is not for him to decide whether prudence or imprudence suits him the better. True, the individual may so decide and so act, to others' harm or to his own mischief. But it is a function of education to convey a moral heritage: to teach that the virtues and the vices are real, and that the individual is not free morally to toy with the sins as he chooses.

No, it has not been the purpose of genuine education to transmit mere approved "values." What true education passes on is a body of truth: that is, a pattern of meanings, perceived through certain disciplines of intellect and imagination. Such education aspires to touch upon ultimate questions—from which the positivist educationist flees. The sort of education which prevailed in Europe and America until the early decades of this century was an endeavor to instruct the rising generation in the nature of reality. That old system began with information; it passed from information to knowledge; it moved from knowledge to wisdom. Its aim, I repeat, was not value, but truth.

This argument of mine in favor of meaning and opposed to the notion of values may surprise some persons who have been eager to restore a moral character to the curriculum. These persons may be puzzled additionally by my refusal to identify values with virtues. What! Then has true education nothing to do with the formation of good character? Is education so concerned with meanings that it ignores morals?

Nay, not so. Yet we must not expect public schools, or any schools, to impart a high degree of *moral* virtue: that must be the effort of family, church, voluntary association, even of the notorious "peer group." We should call upon the schools to resume, rather, their old honorable task of acquainting young people with intellectual virtue—the understanding of right conduct which may be derived from regular disciplines of the mind. A school—with the partial exception of the boarding school—cannot very well form good moral habits, having its pupils within walls only a limited number of hours in a week, and then under artificial restraints. Yet schools may do much to wake the moral imagination—which is another path to the apprehension of meaning.

Let it be understood that the transmitting of the tradition of intellectual virtue is a complex process, much more than a matter of uttering platitudes in classrooms. People who seek to restore the moral aspects of schooling frequently call for abrupt reform and speedy results. One well understands this demand; one sympathizes with the exasperation of many a parent on encountering the vulgarized positivism which has flowed out of teachers' colleges for more than half a century. All the same, the process of restoring meaning and moral purpose in formal education necessarily is a difficult one, requiring time for its attainment. I do not mean that it is a hopeless task. What once has been, may be again.

Over many centuries there was developed an educational tradition, altering with the passage of the years and yet retaining an essential character, that preserved in Europe—and presently in America—some continuity of culture. This tradition persisted, little challenged, well into the nineteenth century; it was strong still, within my own time, at the older British universities. But today everywhere that venerable pattern of education is obscured, at best; often it is broken and derided. The French and the Italians have abandoned much of it, in effect, during very recent years. Public educational authorities in Britain have greatly injured the old educational pattern, deliberately, during the past quarter of a century. In America, the assault upon the old normative schooling became intense during the 1920s and 1930s, and in large degree has triumphed almost everywhere by this time.

The Benthamite and Deweyite educational structure of our day, little concerned with meaning, aims confusedly at personal advancement, technical training, sociability, socialization, custodial functions, and certification—not to mention fun and games. The very possibility of ascertaining the meaning of anything is denied by many a department of philosophy. What does this twentieth-century educational system—if system it may be called—transmit to the rising generation? Chiefly certain technical and commercial skills, together with that training in the learned professions which is vital to our civilization. Modern schooling, at any level, offers little toward the ordering of the soul and the ordering of the commonwealth. Yet neither the person nor the republic can long endure unharmed, if education continues to ignore reason, imagination, and conscience—or treats those three as objects of antiquarian interest merely.

If there is no education for meaning, life will become meaningless for many. If there is no education for virtue, many will become vicious. The American public begins to sense these unpleasant prospects: thus slowly opinion shifts toward such proposals as tuition tax-credits and voucher plans, which might make possible the survival or even the regeneration of a schooling rooted in the long intellectual and moral experience of the species.

The sort of education that prevailed without much challenge until well into the nineteenth century sought an ethical end through an intellectual means. It aspired to the apprehension of meaning. The generations of scholars who contributed to this tradition of culture were well aware that a high culture is a product of art, not of nature; and that it must be nurtured, for the intellectual and moral qualities of humankind always are menaced by overweening will and appetite.

They knew that humane literature, shaping the sentiments as well as the intellect, has a purpose much superior to the inculcation of recent "values" and the effacing of "values" of yesteryear.

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Now I pass from observations on humane letters as a great part of the core curriculum to the parallel tradition or discipline of schooling for civic responsibility or social conformity.

Nowadays one hears again talk of the need for a "civil religion"—in effect, a worship of the human community rather than of God. Unwise emphasis upon the public educational system's teaching of social conformity can lead to such an extreme; but such a pseudo-religion is not the kind of social conformity that I am talking about. The voice of the people is not the voice of God, and I do not propose to render unto Caesar any more than properly belongs to Caesar.

Any good educational system, from classical times to the present, has taught the rising generation loyalty toward the public order, duties to the community, the rudiments of politics, the civic virtues. The principal means for conveying this body of knowledge and sentiment, until very recently, was the study of history.

Our intellectual ancestors knew that what men call the present is merely a film upon the deep well of the past. The evanescent present vanishes as I speak; my words of ten minutes ago have become part of the past; and the future is unknowable. From understanding of the past, chiefly, is meaning derived and some measure of wisdom gained.

Properly taught, the historical discipline greatly interests most young people. I recall writing in the seventh grade an essay in apology for historical studies in the curriculum; I wrote it with enthusiasm, comparing historical researchers to the fascinating exploration of a huge deserted castle. In those days there was an historical course for nearly every grade of school; in high school, we had a year apiece of ancient history, modern history, and advanced American history; also a year of government that amounted to constitutional history.

Rare indeed are the schools that deal so generously with historical studies nowadays. First there came along, under the influence of disciples of John Dewey, abominable courses in "civics"—courses generally repellent to pupils and boring to teachers. (What few good programs in civics I have happened to encounter have been the creations of individual ingenious teachers, not at all the programs outlined by typical civics textbooks). Then there triumphed "integrated" programs of Social Studies along sociological lines, now imposed upon nearly every public school, in part at the admonition of the late James B. Conant. With justice, students call this pseudo-discipline "Social Stew." It is a mess; "there is death in the pot, compound it how you will."

I confess to having been director of a K-12 series of social-science textbooks, used throughout the country; and in that series we employed history as the primary discipline. But the series would have been better had we not tried to be all things to all disciplines. The incoherent character of most social-science curricula leaves the student without much information of an enduring sort, let along knowledge, let alone wisdom. But why should I labor the point? Some people present today may recall my article on this gloomy subject in *The Harvard Educational Review,* a few years ago. The failure of America's social-studies curricula is now widely acknowledged.

In the typical social-studies program, history is contracted to a shadow of its former substance, and the Tartars or the Dinkas are given equal time with the Roman Republic or the Protestant Reformation. I reviewed a "world history" textbook, a decade ago, in which I found but one reference to the Jews: "Jesus came from a people called the Jews, who had lived for a long while in a country called Palestine." That was the beginning and the end of the history of Judaism. Christianity did obtain one other mention: it was noted succinctly that such a religion had prevailed in the Middle Ages and had caused the building of a number of churches.

My old friend T. S. Eliot touched upon this neglect of the historical discipline in his lecture to the Vergil Society, in 1945. The historical ignorance of our age he called "the new provincialism," the provincialism of time. This latter-day provincialism is an attitude "for which history is merely the chronicle of human devices which have served their turn and been scrapped, one for which the world is the property solely of the living, a property in which the dead hold no shares. The menace of this kind of provincialism is, that we can all, all the peoples on the globe, be provincials together; and those who are not content to be provincials, can only become hermits. If this kind of provincialism led to greater tolerance, in the sense of forbearance, there might be something to be said for it; but it seems more likely to lead to our becoming indifferent, in matters where we sought to maintain a distinctive dogma or standard, and to our becoming intolerant, in matters which might be left to local or personal preference."

Those who ignore history are condemned to repeat it, Santayana reminds us; and historical illiteracy in the United States may become a major cause of grave blunders in public policy—indeed, that form of provinciality already has had disastrous consequences. For most of the rising generation, as the Bicentenary of the Constitution approaches, the American Republic seems either a work of nature, not requiring support; or else an oppressive force, exacting taxes and restraining desires. One thinks of the words of Cicero in *De Re Publica:* "Our age inherited the Republic like some beautiful painting of bygone days, its colors already fading through great age; and not only has our time neglected to freshen the colors of the picture, but we have failed to preserve its form and outlines."

It need not be so with us. The celebrating of the Bicentenary of our Constitution could become the occasion for the vigorous revival of historical studies in our schools—the renewal of one large aspect of the Great Tradition of learning. From history, as from humane letters, every generation acquires its sense of the human condition; its acquaintance with the possibilities and the limitations of human action; its awareness that we the living are involved in what Burke called "the contract of eternal society," which joins us with those who have preceded us in time and with those who will follow us in time. The historical consciousness shows men and women that they are part of a great continuity and essence, possessed of duties and rights—something better than naked apes, something higher than the beasts that perish. Historical consciousness lacking, private appetites and the ravenous ego begin to pull society apart.

It is not dull courses about "problems of democracy" or "social group relationships" that will wake the imagination of young Americans at the end of the twentieth century. The sweep, the drama, the color, the courage of true history all can be restored to the revivified curriculum. The strong popular interest in the past, so evident among Americans today, can have its counterpart in the schools. It is through identification of one's self with the current of historical events that a young woman or a young man acquires an affection for his society—not by "in-group" and "out-group" analyses. Mankind can endure anything except boredom, it has been said. In reconstituting the curriculum, we must thrust out the social-studies usurper and restore the legitimate ascendancy of the historical discipline.

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Between the Great Tradition of learning as I have described it so briefly this morning, and what passes for learning nowadays in nearly all our schools, public or independent, a gulf is fixed. This separation had its beginnings in the nineteenth century, if not earlier; but the breach was widened conspicuously some sixty years ago, as the domination of the Instrumentalists, the disciples of John Dewey, was extended over the public-school empire. Increasingly, socialization as an educational end crowded out the development of personal excellence; and obsession with "current awareness" supplanted the search for meaning in the human past.

I do not imply that the Great Tradition is wholly lost. Now and again I am surprised and pleased to find healthy elements of the study of literature and of history still holding up their heads in the rural public school that one of my daughters attends—more there, certainly, than in most suburban schools with their ampler budgets. An increasing number of parents, painfully aware of the decay of the Great Tradition in more things than learning, endeavor to make up at home for some of the deficiencies of the school; others seek out, or take a hand in founding, independent schools concerned for mind and conscience. Yet even many of these last have no clear notion of how to go about the business of renewing the search for wisdom and virtue.

What is the difference, essentially, between the Great Tradition in schooling as it prevailed in North America in the last year of the Articles of Confederation, say, and the bewilderment and discontent in schooling that we see about us in the year 1986? Obviously the schools of our time have vastly better facilities, and enroll a great many more young people; yet the eagerness for true learning seems to be much diminished in our age, and the intellectual and moral results of schooling seem inferior, at every level of society, to the results obtained in 1786, say. Why so?

Perhaps because, as Manning wrote, all differences of opinion are theological at bottom. The Americans of two centuries ago shared, nearly all of them, certain assumptions about human nature; and those assumptions were founded upon religious doctrines. The Americans of 1786 were tolerant enough in religion; but their toleration did not signify indifference or hostility. They, unlike us, were willing to tolerate those vexatious little wretches who wish to pray during the school lunch-hour; unlike us, the Americans of 1786 did not forbid pupils to engage in a moment of silent meditation—during which some juvenile bigots might actually be praying privately, confound them.

Yes, despite doctrinal differences among denominations, it may be said of the Americans of 1786 that in general they believed in the existence of a transcendent order governing the universe; in the teaching that man is made for eternity; in the dogma that human beings have a proclivity toward the sinful; in the concepts of the community of souls and the community of this earth, with the duties that community requires. Half a century later, Tocqueville found these beliefs undiminished among Americans. They have not vanished yet—not among the general population. But in schools?

In some colleges, some schools of education, some graduate schools—why, even in some of our divinity schools—it is possible still to encounter professors who retain an understanding of human nature derived from religious teaching. But it is otherwise with the large majority of teachers in 1986; they have grown up in an arid climate of opinion almost totally secularized, so far as their formal schooling was concerned. The psychologist and the sociologist, not the poet or the historian—and emphatically not the theologian—have been their intellectual mentors.

It is not my present purpose to undertake apologetics. Rather, I am pointing out that the basic assumptions about the human condition at present prevalent in schools of pedagogy are very different from the basic assumptions of 1786. Traditions are rooted in certain postulates or dogmata. If those fundamental beliefs are denied or gradually atrophy, the traditions that have linked generation to generation begin to wither. Outward forms may remain, but they are sapless. The ethical end of literary studies sinks into a muddy sentimentality, and presently the teacher may proclaim himself quite value-free. The history that was intended to transport the student out of the prison-house of the evanescent moment may become an instrument of partisanship or ideology. And this withering of educational traditions may be part and parcel of the general decay of an old order—an order about to be supplanted, it seems, by some dull, arbitrary, professedly egalitarian domination.

The philosophical historians of our age—Dawson, Voegelin, and Toynbee among them—tell us that culture begins in the cult; or, to put it another way, men and women associate in common worship, and out of that religious brotherhood there grow common defense, law, government, organized cultivation, the crafts, the arts, the sciences. Out of the cult, too, come literature and history, the marks of high culture. Any culture develops its life-giving traditions; and so long as those traditions are cherished and believed, the culture flourishes, other things being favorable enough.

But lacking faith in traditions—and such deprivation has occurred in civilizations that fell long ago—a people are forced back upon a rude pragmatism in private life and in public, a groping through the dark wood of their time, without sense of continuity and purpose. In private existence, such servility to the evanescent moment leads to the alienist's couch nowadays, and the divorce court; in the affairs of nations, such naive improvisations (ignoring history) may end in ruinous blunders, not to be undone.

When vital traditions are neglected or received with cold doubt, humane letters sinking into fatigue, eccentricity, perversity; while history becomes a tool of the ruthless ideologue. And education? Why, when schools no longer are permitted to discuss ultimate questions, they do no more than transmit techniques; or become, perhaps, dull forums for trivial disputes among sophists; or—this last the fate of schools of the twentieth century, in many countries—are made into complexes for ideological indoctrination. Who then really cares about the inculcation of wisdom and virtue? Who is soberly concerned for the civic responsibilities of a free people?

Ultimate questions require philosophical and religious responses. If it is made difficult or even impossible for existing public schools to touch upon ultimate questions of meaning—why, something must be done to ensure the survival of a society's higher culture. Arbitrary governing of school curricula by ideological cliques or by judges subject to *pleonexia* must be diminished, or else means must be found to enable people to obtain schooling in alternative institutions. Somewhere and somehow the Great Tradition of learning must be carried on; otherwise presently a decadent form of our culture will be dominated by the selfish and the vicious: by masters who think in Newspeak and chuck history down the memory-hole.

So much for my vaticinations and hopes concerning traditions of thought and the core curriculum. Out of hard necessity, I have taken up grave subjects summarily. Like human bodies, educational modes frequently suffer from disease. What the blood is to the human body, tradition is to a nation's culture. A curriculum deprived of tradition's renewing power becomes desiccated; a culture so afflicted must crumble to powder eventually, whatever its wealth and seeming strength.

This has been an exercise in diagnosis. The remedy, if one is to be found, must be the work of many minds and consciences. It is to raise such urgent questions, I suppose, that the National Council on Educational Research brought us together—and to encourage you and me to look for answers. In learning, the time is out of joint. If you and I are unable to set it right—why, in the phrase of George Washington at the Constitutional Convention, "The event is in the hand of God."

THE ROOTS OF AMERICAN CULTURE: REFORMING THE CURRICULUM

Thomas Fleming

No one doubts we are confronted with a crisis in education. In Joseph Adelson's words, "the degree of disaffection amounts almost to disgust." Even the ordinarily recalcitrant NEA has been terrified into endorsing some form of competency testing. When the NEA supports any form of competency, we know we are in the midst of a revolution. The crisis mentality, owed in no small measure to the publication of *A Nation at Risk,* is welcome because it allows us to raise again certain fundamental questions. Still, some skepticism about the current crisis may be justified. There has always been, within living memory, an educational crisis. No sooner has one generation of experts put out the fire than a new, much more serious conflagration seems to confront their successors. For the past ten years the controversy has centered on declining SAT scores, the failure to learn basic skills like reading and writing, and the conflict between parental values and the liberation morality of guidance counselors. The remedies most often proposed are familiar: Back to Basics, civics classes, and parental involvement. They are obviously sensible plans to lead us out of the post-Vietnam wilderness into the paradise of the 1950's, when Ike was in the White House and dope in school referred to a student acting like Jerry Lewis.

But the 1950's had problems of their own. The launching of Sputnik ignited an explosion of interest and argument over math and science education. The 50's were also a decade of adolescent unrest, when James Dean and Elvis Presley represented the aspirations of American youth. It was the generation of rootless and discontented adolescents so memorably described by Paul Goodman in *Growing up Absurd.* They were the young brothers of Vance Bourjaily's "spent youth" whose life was "not misspent nor well-spent, merely spent—exhibiting no special depths of degradation, nor special heights of intellectual or sensual joy."

Why Johnny Can't Read was the theme of countless attacks on 50's education. Critics insisted that standards had fallen very seriously during World War II and its aftermath. In his 1953 book *Educational Wasteland* Arthur Bestor argued that education had fallen into the hands of its enemies, specialists whose only concern was with technique and with the process of learning. The plight of higher education in the 50's was a direct result of the attempt to divorce teaching from scholarship. "Liberal education," he wrote, "is essentially the communication of intellectual power. That it cannot be communicated by someone who does not possess it—by a teacher who is not a scholar—is self-evident." Bestor seemed, like many good men of the 50's, to be looking back to the halcyon days of his own schooling in the nervous pause between two world wars.

But how good were the schools of the 20's and 30's? If we can believe the reformers of those days—the happy band of brothers that collected in the shadow of John Dewey at Columbia Teachers College—things could have been better. Old-fashioned methods and subjects were still contributing to what the exiled leaders of the Frankfurt school would call "the authoritarian personality." Democratic America needed a democratic and secular education. On the other hand, old-fashioned educators and men of letters were complaining of the decline in standards from the previous century. In a 1930 essay, "American Education," Albert Jay Nock cited the opinion of the current president of Columbia that over the preceding 50 years the quality of instruction had fallen to an almost unbelievable low: "Today," he wrote, "no student in Columbia College and perhaps no professor on its faculty, could pass satisfactorily the examination-tests that were set for admission to Columbia College fifty years ago."

Complaints about the degeneracy of modern youth and nostalgia for the good old days are at least as old as Hesiod's account of the ages of man. "I don't know why we had to climb down out of the trees!" That or something like it must have been among the first sentences uttered by a hominid. But in a progressive era like our own, these constant complaints about the present state of education ought to be taken more seriously. In the past, struggles over education usually signified a cultural crisis of immense proportions. They take only two examples: the moral relativity taught by the Athenian sophists of the fifth century B.C. generated a furious debate over education that is reflected in the early dialogues of Plato and in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, and the attempt of the early humanists to revive the purity of classical Latin was partly responsible for launching the civilization of the Renaissance. When a society decides to quarrel over education, it may be that the parties to the dispute are really talking not so much about books or disciplines as they are advocating rival visions of human life.

For over 100 years Europeans and Americans have been arguing about education. That fact alone suggests that the problem we are facing is very real. From one perspective, at least, the critics are all quite correct. In the 100 years between 1880 and 1980 the quality of literary culture in the U.S. has changed, perhaps irrevocably. In 1880 a moderately well-educated American was at home in a civilization that included Homer and Vergil, Cicero and Burke, Milton and Shakespeare, Plato and Dr. Johnson. His modern counterpart—say, a 30 year old with a B.A. in history from a reputable university—is a cultural vandal to whom the great works of our civilization are only curious relics. The texts of Vergil and Alfred Tennyson are as meaningful to him as a computer chip to a Bushman of the Kalahari.

Wherever we turn we are confronted with barbarism. I am not referring to the mass culture barbarism of advertising jingles and television comedies, but to the political, intellectual, and moral leadership of this society. No one, it seems, can string together more than a few words without committing a grammatical solecism or indulging in the language of the gutter. The complex sentence has practically disappeared from political debate and newspaper editorials, and with it has gone the complex thought. The nation that once sat at the feet of Webster and Calhoun, Lincoln and Douglas, has learned to endure debates and press conferences in which carefully memorized statistics replace logic, and both parties seek to outdo each other in bad manners. Let me make it clear I am not talking exclusively or even primarily about style. It is the quality of thought and the substance of their moral vision which ought to appall ordinary citizens. It clearly does not. Cynical and untalented politicians continue to get elected, newspapers are still subscribed to, and the books of Norman Mailer and E.L. Doctorow routinely make the best-seller list. This could not happen in a country where a significant fraction of the populace had received even a mediocre education.

Under the circumstances, the current debate over verbal SAT scores is somewhat misleading. It has never been demonstrated that the tests are a valid indicator of academic aptitude or performance. They are, however, a powerful social force. Not only do the tests tend to perpetuate inequalities, as David Owen argues in *None of the Above,* but the very format of the tests encourage a multiple choice approach to learning. Even more significant, perhaps, is the argument used by the College Board that its multiple choice tests are fairer than essay tests, because they measure aptitude and are therefore neutral with respect to curriculum. Owen quotes the complaint of the Board's historian that the older essay tests "had left English teachers shackled year after year to specified 'classics,' some of them repugnant to youthful minds." The tests, therefore, constitute a significant weapon in the war against the ancient and modern classics.

Most conservative critics of American education only want the scores to go up, which they undoubtedly will, once we set our mind to it. It will not be very hard to teach even illiterates to pick the right answers on multiple choice tests. Some of the currently successful strategies to improve education amount to nothing more than prepping—teaching to the tests. Some educators freely admit that is what they are doing. By confining our attention to the scores themselves, we are effectively sentencing another generation of students to the illiteracy of quick response and multiple guess.

The discussion of SAT scores illustrates the nature of the broader problem. Writers on both sides refuse to discuss the fundamental issues. What is the object of education? What sort of men and women do we hope to produce from our schools? What are the basics we should be getting back to and what proof do we have they ever worked? The Left attacks SAT scores for perpetuating inequalities, while conservatives use low scores as an indictment against progressive education. Both sides concentrate on the process and technique of schooling far more than they do on the content of learning; they are all extremely political and dwell more upon free enterprise and democracy far more than they do on algebra or history; finally, their vision is circumscribed by the experiences of the past 30 or 40 years.

While the radicals and progressives are eager to liberate us from the shackles of bourgeois society—from suburban lawns and Father Knows Best—the new conservative reformers on the other hand seem to want nothing more than a return to the world of their youth. As Burton Pines describes the new basics schools, "classrooms of these schools probably would look familiar to every American over age thirty-five—the schools that made sure that Johnny couldn't read.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with nostalgia per se. A genuinely reactionary desire to recreate the past can instigate a revolution. The Renaissance humanists claimed to be after nothing more dangerous than a purification of Latin prose and the introduction of Greek into the cultural mainstream. The early Protestants during the same period believed they were recreating the conditions of the early church. Between the two, they created the modern world. But the current desire to restore the world of our childhood is little more than sentimentality—an indulgence which we cannot afford, especially those of us who are charged with planning for the future education of this country.

In fact, both sides in the education debate have their eyes fixed on the future. Since the 18th century, education has been held up as civilization's bootstrap, the principal means by which Western Man would liberate himself from ignorance and superstition, from kings and bishops. In Condorcet's overheated imagination a proper education would result in an almost infinite perfection of mankind—a theme that turns up repeatedly in such different Enlightenment and Romantic writers as Rousseau, William Godwin, Auguste Compte, William Wordsworth, and Thomas Jefferson. In the standard 19th century view, education was the key to every advancement in civilization.

But if education was to be an instrument for reforming the race, this meant that its function had been changed and not only changed but in fact reversed. Since the earliest days of formal education—the rhetorical training given to Athenian boys—the goal had usually been clear: to fit a man for his place in society. The Greek word for education, ***paideia,*** meant nothing more than childrearing—it later comes to mean something like chastisement. Traditional education was an affair of custom and tradition. Even Francis Bacon, one of the first modern intellectuals, describes education as nothing more than "in effect, but an early custom."

According to the ideal, a boy—if he were very lucky—might grow up to be as good a man as his father. If he had received the right education, he was able to take his place as an heir to his nation's history. According to Quintilian, the most learned writer on ancient schooling, the goal was both practical and ethical. His famous definition of the orator, a good man skilled in speaking, summons up the picture of a man able to defend himself and his friends in the court and who could make his influence felt in the deliberations of his people. While a man of superior parts and training might rise, like Cicero, from humble beginnings, education was generally seen as a profoundly conservative force: it was the living memory of an entire civilization. Maturity meant living under the shadow of the past. As Cicero expressed it so memorably in the *Orator,* "A man ignorant of the past is condemned to remain forever a child."I might mention in passing the superior wisdom of ancient conservatives over their modern descendants. Santayana's famous dictum about those who are ignorant of history are condemned to repeat it, does little more than paraphrase Cicero and contaminate his lucidity with an entirely dubious proposition—does history actually repeat itself? Did even Santayana think so?

But Santayana, for all his reactionary impulses, was determined to be original, even at the expense of the truth. In this sense, he was only being modern. The goal of our education is, after all, explicitly revolutionary. It seeks to amend certain major clauses of the human constitution. The exact object may differ. Locke, Rousseau, and Dewey all had in mind an education that would produce the ideal citizens of a republic or democracy, while 20th-century Marxists have attempted to create the new Soviet Man and his more radical brothers. But the differences are less significant than the similarities. Both sets of reformers wish to transform human nature by "changing the conditions of which it is a function." That last phrase belongs to B.F. Skinner, who is only the best-known enemy of the old Adam, historical man.

It is sometimes forgotten that C.S. Lewis began *The Abolition of Man* with a criticism of modern education, the humanities in particular. He begins his prophetic work with this mild statement: "I doubt whether we are sufficiently attentive to the importance of elementary text-books." The moral relativism which treats no opinion as inherently true or false, but as a question of "values"—abominable expression—was already a part of elementary education in the 1940's. At the same time, editorialists on both sides of the Atlantic were busy clamoring for democratic virtues like patriotism and self-sacrifice for the common good. In a paradox that is no paradox, Lewis observed wryly, "We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst." Lewis realized that monstrosities like behavior modification and genetic engineering—techniques that existed only in the imagination back in 1947—represented only the latest phase of a revolution that had already taken place in the schools. They all aim at the creation of a new man, liberated from history, from nature, and ultimately—from God.

The revolutionary project in education had obvious implications, from the very beginning, for what is called the curriculum. Under the old dispensation, most of what a student learned beyond the three R's were the Bible and the Greek and Latin Classics. Some higher math was taught, and a student might dabble in one or another of the sciences, but what we now call the humanities was at the center. I say what we now call the humanities, because the term has come to be used so broadly that it includes everything that isn't *science*. It once meant nothing more (nor less) than the languages and literatures of ancient Greece and Rome. It was supremely interdisciplinary, since it included the teaching of grammatical theory, several genres of literature, philosophy, and history. What is more, it relied heavily on comparing two quite dissimilar civilizations. Above all, the long winnowing-out process—a matter of some two millenia—ensured that students were typically exposed to nothing less than the most splendid achievements of the human mind. Finally, the old humanities was a central core of learning that could be taken for granted in anyone who had stayed in school to the age of sixteen. Politicians in debates, lawyers in courts, writers of newspaper editorials, and literary essayists could all rely on their audience's ability to spot a tag from Horace or an illustration from Livy. The old humanities was concrete, specific, and the result of many centuries of cautious trial and error experimentation. They were also woven into the fabric of our Christian civilization.

The new humanities is a different story. It is vague and general—including English, art appreciation, history, and modern languages. There is even something called humanistic sociology for soc majors who can't learn statistics. Obviously, nothing so broadly inclusive can be taken for granted as a cultural given, and the effect of cafeteria-course selection in colleges combined with academic specialization is to reduce most civilized conversation to certain safe topics: the weather, football, interesting new restaurants, and—in some circles—politics.

We may not know what the humanities are, but to reverse Groucho Marx's line, whatever it is, we're for it. The editors of *Against Mediocrity* point out that the two dozen recent study groups, commissions and task forces on education all concur in defending the role of the humanities. The authors of such studies usually refer—quite properly—to ethical values or education for democracy or the need to learn about other cultures. Perhaps it is just as well that they almost never get down to specifics, because the slightest effort to imagine a "humanities curriculum" would almost immediately expose the contradictions in such an approach. Plato and Hobbes, for examples, both wrote classics of political philosophy. No general humanities course could get away without at least mentioning one or the other, but neither is much of an advocate for democracy, and I am not sure that many college seniors are prepared to refute their claims for an authoritarian state, much less to confront the ethical challenges offered by writers like Machiavelli or the Marquis de Sade. Ethics is a tricky business, especially if young minds set out to discuss fundamental questions. Finally, I wonder how wise it is to expose young people to other cultures, before they have been adequately indoctrinated into the traditions of their own civilization.

One traditional answer to this problem is something like the Great Books program at the St. Johns Colleges. But what are these great books we are supposed to be reading? Some recent lists include third-rate American novels, sentimental Romantic poets, and specimens of vulgar political rhetoric. As appropriate "models of excellent writing" Bill Honig lists *Oliver Twist, Huckleberry Finn, Fathers and Sons,* and *Animal Farm,* which he describes as "whopping good tales that also happen to be masterpieces of prose style and penetrating insight into the human condition." To one extent or another, these are all pretty good books. But how effective are they as models for the young? In the first place, they all share virtually the same world-view of modern industrial society. Apart from Turgenev, however, none of these writers can accurately be described as a master of prose. Orwell was a good journalist but only a mediocre novelist and his little beast fable offers only an unoriginal political critique of communism—hardly a "penetrating insight into the human condition." As for Turgenev, the quality of his prose depends, obviously, on the translator. Besides, the sentimental irony of a Russian romantic may not be quite suitable for teenagers. When educationists speak of the classics or the great books, they might, of course, be talking about Sophocles, but they are probably thinking of *A Farewell to Arms* or *A Catcher in the Rye*.

In the view of almost all librarians and many teachers, anything published between the covers of a book is a rare and precious commodity. After half a life misspent in reading and, worse, reviewing all too many of these rare and precious productions, my own view comes closer to *Ecclesiastes:* "Of the making of books there is no end and much weariness of the spirit." Going to bookstores is one of the great pleasures of youth, but eventually a mature mind begins to find something vaguely repellent in all this celebration of culture. It can be embarrassing to come upon your favorite books in a collector's library. There they are, Baudelaire and Pindar, Thomas Browne and Ben Johnson in special editions with tinted endpapers and lavish illustrations or—worst of all—in uniform bindings. Very pretty, no doubt, but it is a little like finding your daughter in the sultan's harem. She's beautifully dressed and well taken care of but somehow that is not what you had in mind, as you were tucking her in at night or nursing her through a fever.

There is nothing sacred about books. They are, at least most of them, no better than the frail specimens of humanity that wrote them. Many of them do a great deal of damage. When Shakespeare's Antony observed that "the evil that men do lives after them," he may well have been thinking exclusively of writers. Antony, like Shakespeare, knew all too many of that breed.

What good are the humanities? If we can believe their defenders, well-written books and pretty pictures will make us good citizens, moral men and women leading rich and satisfactory lives. But will *Death of a Salesman* really turn a schoolboy into a patriot? Will thinking about the humanities even make us think and write more clearly. One recent defender of the humanities thinks so, although he confesses to certain reservations about the way it is being done these days. Listen:

> If school studies are assessed on their replicative and applicative uses a decade or so after end-of-course examinations were passed, one finds most of what was studied as general education is either forgotten or not applied.

Note the twisted syntax, the bizarre combination of jargon with an antiquated pedantic style; note the confused tense sequence—all this from an obviously intelligent and thoughtful man who has devoted a long and no doubt useful life to educational philosophy and the humanities. It would be unfair to single out anyone by name. Pick up any issue or any journal devoted to education or the humanities—the *PMLA*, for example—and enjoy the spectacle of so-called humanists who can neither think nor write.

I am entirely in sympathy with those scientists who regard the humanities as a waste of time—an unseemly mixture of frills and ideology. What does a student learn in his history classes? To hate his country, despise the traditions of his civilization, and to repudiate the democratic and republican forms of American public life as the hypocritical ideology of the bourgeoisie. For almost ten years Diane Ravitch has been exposing the revisionist history of our schools to a devastating attack, but it is still in place, unshaken, in textbooks, college history departments, and—above all—in high school history classes.

From English classes the student comes to realize that good books cannot simply be read: they must be interpreted by a special breed of men known as literary critics, for whom nothing is ever what it seems. Even the methods of deconstruction are beginning to seep into the classroom. The special advantage of this sort of criticism is that it enables the teacher to bypass entirely the original context and intentions of the author. Up until recently the great classics of English literature presented almost insuperable obstacles to the classroom teacher.

Milton, Pope, Swift, Samuel Johnson, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Eliot were incorrigibly reactionary in most of their mature social and political attitudes. What is worse, they were religious. In fact, it is hard to find much explicitly non-Christian literature in English that is any good. Even Hemingway tried to be a Catholic and Faulkner never succeeded in repudiating the faith of his fathers. But with deconstruction, none of that matters, because students can be taught to chatter about the meaning of meaning and ignore the content of whatever it is they are being forced to read.

As they are currently being preached in American schools, the humanities are at best a harmless waste of time and at their worst a corrupting influence. It was better, I admit, in the 50's and early 60's. At the small college I attended in the early 60's I was forced to read a great deal of French—for which I am grateful, although even then the English literature courses were a complete waste of time. The school still retained a classics requirement—4 years of college-level Latin or Greek for any arts degree. In the debate over this outmoded requirement it was the scientists who defended it against the attacks coming from modern languages, English, and history. As one old chemist observed, Latin and Greek were the only subjects in the humanities as rigorous as math and science.

From the scientist's perspective, intellectual rigor is one of the essential qualities of a good curriculum. For some time now, however, it has been fashionable to talk about making learning fun. The older view was just the opposite. Aristotle was expressing an ancient commonplace when he declared that "those who are learning do not play. For learning comes with pain." But influential writers like Montaigne and Locke (to say nothing of Rousseau) spoke grandly about engaging the child's interest and not discouraging his budding genius. The symbolic founder of modern education is, after all, John Comenius who first put pictures into children's textbooks, in the seventeenth century.

There were critics, of course. In *Waverly* Walter Scott wondered aloud "whether those who are accustomed only to acquire instruction through the medium of amusement, may not be brought to reject that which approaches under the aspect of study." More recently, Joseph Adelson has written tellingly of "the sense of lost authority in schools," but early in the last century Hegel was already warning against "the play theory of education," which encourages the child to view what is childish as something of inherent worth and "lowers serious pursuits and education itself to a form of childishness for which the children have scant respect."

I should like to suggest that my old chemistry professor was correct: that a decent humanities curriculum will have as much rigor as the sciences and will not coddle even 5th-graders with childish books and indulgent teachers. From what I have said already, it should also be obvious that I think that a prime function of the humanities ought to be the integration of our young savages into our civilization. I am not here speaking abstractly about various universalist systems of ethics, which children can scarcely comprehend, but of the specific historical experiences of Western man, going back ultimately to Achilles, Odysseus, and the patriarchs of the Old Testament. An American with a Ph.D. in Chinese but who is unfamiliar with Job or Agamemnon, is simply not a part of our civilization, however much he knows.

Finally, there is the question of basic skills which, in addition to simple arithmetic, include the ability to speak, read, and write effectively and correctly. There are other criteria, but these will do for the moment, since they are indispensable. It is apparent to everyone, I think, that the humanities, as they are currently practiced in the United States, are not doing an adequate job on any of these three tasks—intellectual discipline or "cognitive development" if you like that sort of jargon, social and cultural integration, and effective English. What about the older version of the humanities—the *litterae humaniores?* Were Latin and Greek capable only of training an elite? We know, at least, they did do that much. Or are they capable, in one form or another, of training the average and below-average students of American public schools.

Studies done in several major American cities reveal an astonishing record of success for Latin programs. What is particularly striking about these experiments is the fact that most of them have been conducted in inner-city schools with a high proportion of disadvantaged and minority students. The best experimental program has been conducted in Philadelphia, where between 1967 and 1976 Latin enrollment in the public schools rose from 490 to 14,000. In 1971 the Philadelphia schools conducted a study in which fifth graders were given 15 to 20 minutes of Latin a day. The Latin students were matched with a control group selected for both ability and background. At the end of the year, the Latin students were found to be one year ahead of the control group on the vocabulary section of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. In a similar experiment conducted in Washington, D.C., a randomly-selected group of poor students took part in daily Latin instruction. These were students who had been rejected for other foreign language training, because of their below-grade level reading skills. At the end of the year, it was discovered that these students had come "from behind to achieve above average achievement in vocabulary and total reading." The most impressive aspect to the Washington experiments was the comparison with students given another foreign language. In one study, sixth graders were given Latin instruction for only 8 months and succeeded in climbing "from the lowest level of reading ability to the highest level for the grade, equalling the achievement of pupils who had studied French or Spanish for 38 months."

Similar results were reported in Indianapolis, Boston, and Worcester, Massachusetts. In Los Angeles, particular success has been had with students from a Spanish-speaking background. Apparently, Latin has the capacity to serve as a bridge between Spanish and English. Once a student learns to see his Spanish vocabulary in Latin, he can translate that Latin into English derivatives. But despite these successes, Latin is not growing as rapidly as ought to be predicted. The program in Washington has been scaled down, and it was only public outcry that prevented a massive budget cut in Philadelphia. Rudolph Masciantonio, who directed the Philadelphia program, comments ruefully that "Decision-makers sometimes tend to ignore the research data . . . for budgetary, political, or other reasons."

When I have brought up these findings in conversation with experts in the education, their first response is: the students are self-selected. Anyone who wants to take Latin is already an interested student. But, in fact most of the students were selected either at random or because they were underachievers. The next line of defense is that Latin teachers are more motivated than other instructors. If this were true it ought to be set down to the credit of Latin, but for the most part it is not true. Many of the teachers taking part in these programs were not Latin teachers at all. They were simply selected to receive enough training to get them started. In one case in Colorado, with which I am familiar, a young Spanish teacher was told by her principal that she was going to have to teach Latin. Being a good sport, she gave it a try. The good results she witnessed made her a convert. She proved to be so successful a teacher that in 5 years Latin enrollment increased from one section to 5. This year she sent her best students on a 5-year scholarship to Harvard and received the Colorado language teacher award.

The surprising thing is that anyone should be surprised by these results. More than half the words in English are derived from Latin—

and it is the more difficult half. In addition, the structure of traditional English grammar is more than a little dependent on Latin's more formal syntax. In fact, without Latin, it is extremely difficult to learn correct English. Evelyn Waugh attributed his own literary success to Latin. In his autobiography, Waugh observes "Today I remember no Greek. I have never read Latin for pleasure and should now be hard put to it to compose a simple epitaph. But I do not regret my superficial classical studies. I believe that the conventional defence of them is valid; that only by them can a boy fully understand that a sentence is a logical construction and that words have basic inalienable meanings, departure from which is either conscious metaphor or inexcusable vulgarity. Those who have not been so taught—most Americans and most women—unless they are guided by some rare genius, betray their deprivation." But even if Latin had no effect whatsoever on English and math performance, the classics would still be essential to a decent education.

Whether we like it or not, ours is a derivative culture. In some areas of life involving science and technology, we have improved upon our inheritance, but in the more important matters that affect the human heart, we remain in bondage to our masters. Our literary culture, or what is left of it, has been dependent upon the classics for its genres, its techniques, its models. It is virtually impossible for the classically illiterate to appreciate poets like Donne, Milton, Pope, and Eliot. It is not simply a matter of literary, mythical, and historical allusions—although what a modern reader can make out of *The Anatomy of Melancholy* I can't imagine. It is more a question of community. People who live in a small town know more than an outline of its history; they are themselves woven into the textures of its life. They know whom to respect, whom to despise—and why. They understand the code, they get the jokes. To be familiar with the classics is to be on that sort of small-town footing with the civilization we have inherited. This civilization extends beyond the borders of our English speaking world to include all of European civilization including the long exotic centuries of Byzantium.

Our most obvious recourse, in the present crisis, is also the least likely: the reintroduction of a genuine humanities curriculum based on the ancient classics and bolstered by history, the literary masterpieces of our own language, and the religious documents central to the ethics and culture of our Judeo-Christian civilization.

But the classical heritage represents more than a body of languages and literature, more even than the legal and civic traditions we have inherited from Greece and Rome. As civilized men we are, to paraphrase Tennyson, a part of all that we have met. By turning our backs on our intellectual and spiritual ancestors, as we have done deliberately, we are cutting off a part of ourselves.

There used to be another reason for studying the classical languages: For nearly two millenia Latin was the language of the Roman church and, for most of that time, of all of western Christendom. Latin not only unlocks St. Jerome's version of the scriptures, it is a key to the great dogmatic and theological writers of the Catholic tradition. To content yourself with reading Augustine in translation, by the way, is something like watching your children grow up on videotape—you get the facts but not the textures of life. Greek, of course, is the language of the New Testament. Without it, it is impossible for a theologian or even a simple preacher to speak with any confidence about the meaning of any passage. Let me hasten to assure you that not one young clergyman out of a hundred knows enough Greek to get through a good first-year course.

The decline of scripture in our schools is not confined to the disappearance of Greek and Latin from the curriculum. While the Bible may sometimes be taught as literature in some schools, religion has been effectively abolished from the curriculum. That this should have happened in America, of all places, is particularly strange. Tocqueville observed on his visit that in America education was in the hands of the clergy, but within thirty years the tide had turned. Horace Mann, the leading proponent of state education, had serious reservations about traditional Christianity, and there are a number of clear indices to the erosion of religion in American schools. Each successive edition of McGuffey's readers, for example, was less overtly religious. In Massachusetts in particular, public schools readers in the mid-19th century devoted a diminishing amount of space to Biblical quotations and Bible stories. Eventually, scripture came to be replaced by a civil religion or democratic patriotism and civic virtue—the very sort of instruction which well-meaning people like Morris Janowitz want to revive.

This brings us back to the present efforts of conservative educators to conserve the educational traditions of the 20th century. Conservative impulses are a good thing, generally speaking, only so long as you are conserving something valuable. But when the enemy is in possession of the citadel, it is not a good time to write tracts in defense of the regime. It is, to use the old phrase, shutting the barn door after the horses are out. Worse, it is to turn over the entire family farm to a set of political scoundrels who bought it up for taxes. As the great defender of the family farm, Wendell Berry remarks in a soon to be published poem: "It is dangerous to remember the past only for its own sake, dangerous to deliver a message that you did not get."

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VALUES IN TEXTBOOKS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

Paul Vitz

After all of these erudite comments about education, you now have to listen to a social scientist, and what I am going to be talking about today primarily are the particular results of a study. The question that began this project was a question which was not on my mind, but one which I was talked into attempting to answer. That question is, are our textbooks in the public schools biased? I was asked to look at these textbooks as carefully as possible to see if there was bias in them and if so, of what kind; and I was asked to begin with a look at how religion was treated in our public school textbooks.

I am sure you probably already know the answer to my question: Yes, there is bias, but the most interesting thing about it for me was to discover the way in which this bias was expressed. Curiously enough all three of us on this panel seem to have been looking at C.S. Lewis's *Abolition of Man* recently and I would say that the first sentence of it just quoted by Dr. Fleming is equally germane to my study, so I will quote it again. Lewis begins his book, ***The Abolition of Man,*** with these words: "I doubt we are sufficiently attentive to the importance of elementary textbooks." I know I was not sufficiently attentive until this project forced me to take a careful look. The result was that I was most certainly roused from my educational slumber and I hope that the findings of my study may do a little of the same for you.

We begin by looking at how religion is represented in the typical social studies textbook used in our nation's public schools. A few words about the selection of texts: In this part of the study I looked at 60 social studies textbooks. These involved 10 major publishers, and I looked at the books that they published for grades 1-6. Thus the total sample is 60 books. These were major publishers. In particular, they were all of the textbooks on the approved lists for the states of California and Texas, plus three other textbooks that were commonly found in other states. There is no doubt that these are widely representative social studies textbooks. I don't know of any sample as large as 60 that has ever been looked at. I want to make one other comment about these books. Of course I did not sample all publishers, and although I will not emphasize it, it is important to remember that some of the publishers were better than others. But in general these textbooks are very, very much alike; so that even if I did not look at every particular publisher, it is unlikely, with one or two exceptions, that those not in the sample are very different from the books that I did look at.

I would describe these textbooks as similar to each other as the menus of McDonald's and Burger King, and they are about at that level, if we follow the gustatory metaphor, of food for the mind.

A few words now about the general content of the textbooks. They were all organized on the same principle, a very simple one that allows them to be consistently compared with each other. The first grade textbooks dealt with the individual student, usually in the family or school setting. The second grade text expanded the setting to include the community or neighborhood. The third grade expanded the setting to the larger community, usually the town or city, not just the local neighborhood or small community and the fourth always involved either regions of the country or regions of the world. The fifth grade books were all introductions to American history and the sixth grade books were all introductions to world history or world culture.

Since all the publishers followed the same sequence, it makes sense to look at the first four grades together because they all are concerned with describing for the child the nature of life today in America and a little bit about the nature of America's past. In other words, the function of these books is presumably to introduce the child to social life, economic life, and a little bit of political life that characterize or are typical of the United States today. They expand this focus in Grade 1 from the individual and the family up to the region of the country in Grade 4.

What I looked at first was how religion was treated. In order to do that I had to make one basic distinction as to what kind of religious reference I was looking at. Now remember, I am looking at this in a very simple way. First, I made the distinction—was it a reference to religion, and if so, was it a primary religious reference. By that I meant a reference to religious activity *per se:* worship, praying, going to church, instruction. That is, something that you would call a religious action.

I construed as a secondary religious reference one that mentioned a church, or the fact that Martin Luther King was depicted as a "Reverend," or perhaps a reference to the Amish. Such an item would acknowledge the existence of religion but not refer to anything religious *per se*.

These categories are very reliably scored and I, with an assistant, looked at every page of these books and every page of our summary was looked at with the books in hand by an outside educational agency that verified or audited our findings. The name of this agency was the Educational Products Information Exchange, or EPIE, a well known educational research corporation.

Now let me try to summarize the first results that I think are most important. Not one of these books, and we are talking about 40 books for the first four grades, had one word, that is one text reference, to primary religious activity occurring in representative American life today. That is, they did have some references to past religious activity. However, these books had no description of anyone who went to church or any family that went to church, or any individual or family that prayed, or individual engaged in a religious activity as far as the words in those books are concerned and as far as contemporary American life is concerned. In other words, the incredibly vibrant religious life in our society today was without a textual reference in these books. The nearest approximation to it was a passage in one book that referred to the Amish as having a particular way of life and another which read as follows: (this was a reference to the Spanish urban ghetto called El Barrio)—"Religion is important for people in El Barrio. Churches have places for dances and sports events." That was the entire reference to religion in that book and in that series.

There were, however, a few images that did show primary religious activity in these books—not very many, but there were a few that showed religious activity in contemporary life. There were four images that referred to Judaism or Jewish religious life, and there were two that referred to Catholic religious life. There were two that were non-denominational, one that referred to the Amish and one that referred to Episcopalian monks. These ten images—there might have been an eleventh one, there is some debate on that category—these ten or eleven images were distributed over 40 books. There were of course secondary religious references that I haven't gone into, and there were more of these, but most of them just referred to a church, or they had a picture of a neighborhood that would show a house of worship or something of that kind. There were more of them, but even they were quite uncommon and in fact half the books didn't even have a single secondary religious reference. So the basic way in which religion is treated in American textbooks is that it isn't there at all. It has been removed as a referent.

Now some of you may know that my study has been subject to some political criticism. In response to that all I would say is that there have been independent verifications of this finding. Americans United for Separation of Church and State, an organization which is not in any way especially sympathetic with my conclusions, did a separate study of American history and civics texts and came to the same conclusion that I did, namely that religion was essentially omitted. In particular we noted that the issue of religious freedom was omitted. I would say that religious freedom was not treated nearly as often as it should be; it wasn't given the importance it should have, but when religion was occasionally mentioned in the past in American life the issue of religious freedom was usually the focus. In any case obviously if religion is not referred to as an important part of American life today, of course religious freedom is also absent as a type. In any case, it would be hard I think, for anyone to argue that these textbooks are an unbiased representation of our society. In fact, this is not social science, it is a kind of social engineering to remove religion from our textbooks.

I have a detailed description of how the fifth grade books treated American history. I guess the simplest way to summarize those books is to point out what I did. I looked for any reference to religion of any kind, word or picture, and then scored that reference as occurring in a given century—did it occur in the 1600's, the 1700's, the 1800's or the 1900's. That's relatively easy to do, and then I counted the number of pages that each textbook gave to each century. So we got the proportion of pages talking about the 1600's that had any reference to religion, and so on up to our own century. You probably can't see it from here but this graph shows that the percentage of references to religion in the pages dealing with the 1600's was slightly over 50%. By the 20th century the percentage had dropped to roughly 1%, and most of these references were quite minor. If it said "Reverend" Martin Luther King, I counted that as a religious reference even if it didn't say anything else about religion.

The sixth grade textbooks which are world history and world culture are also seriously deficient. The absence of any serious treatment of Judaism was one of the most interesting and surprising things. There was much more reference to Islam in the world history books. In American history books there was more mention made of American Indian religion than Judaism or Jewish religion.

Another set of texts that I looked at were the high school history books. My major finding here was again an enormous neglect of the religious history of the United States, particularly in the last 100 or 150 years. As one example of that, if anyone were interested in the history of what has been called the "religious right," there wouldn't be a clue in these books. And the enormous significance of religion for our society was totally without reference in these high school history books.

De Tocqueville pointed out that America is a very religious country. This is something that often people are startled to hear, but when they think about it, they say, Yes, it's true. We are the most religious country of any of the modern nations in the world. The only possible exceptions are places like Poland and Ireland, which have special situations. America has had enormous religious energy characterizing its society and De Tocqueville was one of the many observers who have pointed this out. Many religions have been created in America—the Seventh Day Adventists, the Black Muslims, the Mormons, etc. There is an enormous religious energy in this country and it has fueled our society in many ways, normally for good, but there have also been some problems with it. However, this religious energy is really without reference, without any recognition, in these American history books.

I also looked at how the family was represented in the social studies textbooks. Most of these books, in fact, did have a fair emphasis on the family. What was interesting were the particulars of this family emphasis. A typical definition of the family was "The family is a group." This makes a baseball team a family. Or "A family is the people you live with." This makes a fraternity house a family. I looked at how these books would treat the basic understanding of the family in the traditional sense. I think most of us would say the foundation of the family is marriage, and that this means that family has a husband and wife in it. Or at least there is a marriage. You might be interested to know that the word "wedding" and the word "marriage" do not occur in these books. There was no reference to marriage as being the foundation of the family. The words "husband" and "wife" don't occur. Neither do the words "homemaker" or "housewife" occur. The notion that a woman as a homemaker or mother is leading a dignified and an important life was never mentioned. Now people concerned with our high schools tell us that they are worried about illegitimate pregnancy and births among teenagers. Yet they lay foundations for this problem by neglecting totally the importance of marriage for family life in the first six grades.

The third set of textbooks that I looked at were readers. I looked at the basal readers, the books used to teach reading in the third grade and in the sixth grade. I looked at 11 major publishers at each grade level. This totals 22 books and includes 11 of the major publishers. Again I looked at how religion was treated, and how other moral ideals or themes were treated.

As regards religion, first of all, there was not one story that featured a direct religious motivation of a Jewish or Christian kind in it. In the 22 books I looked at, there were 670 articles or stories. Out of these 670 there was not one that featured a religious motivation in the Jewish or Christian sense. There were a couple that featured non-Western religion, such as American Indian religion. There were a small number of stories that did represent religion in the story in some important but subsidiary way. When I say featured, I mean the narrative center was never religious, except for one or two that were non-Western. I think about seven or eight had a religious theme in various ways, and curiously enough, most of these were in one book. More than half of the religious stories were in one book. This publisher, Houghton Mifflin, was by far the best in terms of the treatment of religion in the sixth grade readers. Nevertheless, only about one percent of the stories in all these books had any kind of religious theme. There was not one article about religion and there were many articles treating such subjects as magic.

It was interesting to examine the treatment of patriotism. Of the total of 670 stories there were only five that had any patriotic theme, and four of these were about a girl in the War of Independence and one was about a boy in the War of Independence. None of the classic patriotic stories were there, e.g., Nathan Hale, Patrick Henry, John Paul Jones, etc. Some of the few "patriotic" stories were also primarily feminist in certain respects. Traditional patriotism such as represented by Horatio at the Bridge or Nathan Hale is not in these books.

There was almost nothing on what we would call the business world, on the notion of free enterprise. I am not necessarily passing an unqualified positive evaluation on free enterprise, at least in certain respects. But I think it is an important part of our country. Family business and the entrepreneur have been major positive contributors to our society. Yet there wasn't a single Horatio Alger story here. Again the most I could find were four stories that had any possible business significance.

The main effect of reading these stories is the same effect you get listening to Muzak. These stories are essentially so dumbed down or so rewritten as to be to real literature as Muzak is to real music. They are very much in that boring, treacly, sentimental vein. Often when these books publish a story by a well known author, such as Pearl Buck or Isaac Bashevis Singer, they do not publish the original work, but a version that has been rewritten, shortened and adapted.

Let me give you an example. Recently in an article, "Censoring the Sources," published in *The School Library Journal* (March 1986), a writer of children's stories by the name of Barbara Cohen discussed this very process. Ms. Cohen describes how she had written a book called *Molly's Pilgrim*. It was a book with a strong Jewish theme. In it she discusses the Jewish harvest day and the festival of Sukkos. She indicated that because this festival is in the Old Testament, it very probably influenced the Pilgrims in establishing Thanksgiving. That is one of the central meanings, perhaps the central meaning of the story.

The interesting thing is that a major textbook publisher called her and asked permission to reprint it in their reader. When they do this, they always shorten and adapt the story they are reprinting. They sent her the shortened, adapted form, and when she read this new form, she discovered that the story wasn't merely cut, it was maimed. All mention of Jews, God and the Bible, and Sukkos had been excised, so the writer returned the copy with a note denying permission for its use.

The rest of the article tells what happens when this hand grenade goes off on the desk of the editor at this major publisher in New York. They call her on the phone and say, Look, you can't do this. We've got problems. You gotta let us put it in. They point out that she is going to get $1500 or something like that. They argue back and forth, they give and take, they tell her they love her story but we can't have religion in it.

"Try to understand. We have a lot of problems. If we mention God, some atheist will object. If we mention the Bible, someone will want to know why we don't give equal time to the Koran."

"But the Pilgrims did read the Bible," the author contends.

"You know that. I know that. But the textbook won't be purchased if it has things in it that people object to, no matter how unreasonable."

There is a lot of give and take for a while and finally there is a compromise. The author allows the story to be rewritten, but not without misgivings. In the end, what is allowed in is the reference to the Jewish harvest holiday and a reference to the fact that the Jews worshipped, but not Whom they worshipped.

Barbara Cohen commented, "Since you leave in the verb *worship*, I can live without the word God, I admit, everyone will understand God is the object of worship, even those third graders you are so sure cannot grasp tabernacles, but how can you cut out the word Bible? The sentence makes no sense without the word Bible."

"We can't mention the Bible. We'll get into terrible trouble if we mention the Bible."

"All right," the author replies. "Then make the sentence read, 'The Pilgrims knew about the Jewish harvest holiday.' That makes a little more sense than their reading about it in no book that was ever written."

"You are wonderful!" is the response.

"Yeah," the author muses, "I am wonderful. And so I let them have the story in which God and the Bible would remain eternally unacceptable."

From this experience the author concludes, "Censorship in this country is widespread, subtle and surprising. It is not inflicted on us by the government. It doesn't need to be. We inflict it on ourselves."

So here is a description of the actual process of how religion is excised and how certain bogeymen seem to be haunting these publishers.

I want to conclude by making just a few remarks about what I think this implies for change in the present school system. First of all, it is clear there is bias in our textbooks. It is clear that there is a systematic secular bias, an anti religious bias, and it is possible that under the kind of pressure that this and other studies are applying that the publishers could address the issue of dealing relatively intelligently with information about religion. Let us hope they will put the religious significance back in our history, in our textbooks, or at least give the facts of the matter. But the basic issue is not whether religion is accurately treated in the textbooks. What is really central are the values that surround and support the facts. This central issue is the whole moral vision of our nation as a nation under God. Whether they can and will deal with that is less obvious.

In many respects the underlying problem is that the public or government schools have to operate from some general philosophy of education. Whatever that philosophy is, it will be unjust to those parents and children who do not accept it. Therefore, we are going to have to accept the fact that the very pluralism of America, which we are so proud of, requires a pluralism of American schools. Important ways in which we might move in that direction have been outlined by Secretary Bennett and others. I will leave it to some others to determine whether we should have a voucher system or a tax rebate or what have you. But I think it is important that we make progress along these lines because the school wars in which we are now will only get larger as America's variety gets greater. As the discontent with the content of much of what is in our curriculum increases, there will be even more conflict and more of a withdrawal from the present public school system. So it seems to me that if we wish to return to domestic tranquility in the world of schools, we will have to adopt some kind of tax support for non public, private and religious schools.

The final point I would like to make is this. As far as I can see, all the other major Western democracies have already gone through the school battles that we are in the middle of now. They have all come to the same conclusion expressed in varying patterns and configurations. They have all come to the fundamental conclusion that the parents have the right to choose the school that they believe will most effectively educate their child, and that in order to implement that choice, state funds must be made available to all types of schools. That has resolved the school wars in Holland and England and Scotland and many other countries. We have much to learn from their history.

CHARACTER

Education has for its object the formation of character.

—*Herbert Spencer*

Our ultimate security . . . is based upon the individual's character, information and attitude—and the responsibility rests squarely upon those who direct education in America.

—*Theodore Roosevelt*

THE DEATH OF PERSONALITY THEORY AND WHAT IT MEANT FOR THE STUDY OF CHARACTER

Joseph Adelson

To say that personality theory died no doubt overstates the case; but not by much. A few days after setting down that title, I began to grow uneasy, fearing that an habitual irritation with academic psychology had once again overcome good sense, and led me to imagine a death that had not taken place. Yet at that very moment, a benevolent unconscious intervened, drew me to a bookshelf, where I found myself gazing at a recent textbook on personality theory. Opening it, I discovered that it contained a discussion of ten positions. There were such household names as Freud, Adler, and Erik Erikson. There were some, like George Kelly, not so familiar, but widely known in the field. There were still others, like B. F. Skinner, who did not seem to be theorists of personality, but theorists of something else. There was something slightly odd about this array, and it took a moment to realize what it was—that only one of the ten was of recent vintage, that is, created after 1970, and that one, interestingly enough, not a theory of personality, but a theory of learning. A few went back as far as the turn of the century, and most dated back to the 1940s and 1950s—rather startling, given the neomania governing the textbook business in psychology. Perhaps there was something eccentric about this book. I picked up the volume adjoining it, even more recently published—1986—and found it provided essentially the same coverage of the same distinguished but somewhat ancient doctrines. In short, not much new work, few signs of life. If not death, then moribundity.

Here is another clue: for many years, social and personality psychology had been linked, sharing the same scholarly society and the same major journal. Then social psychology began to dominate the society, in number and authority; what was more troubling was that the journal was no longer publishing much on the topic of personality. These trends were developing their own momentum, and after some years several of the leading researchers in personality came together to demand a fairer shake in convention time and publication space. They felt that research in personality was being ignored, that a sort of Gresham's law was operating, wherein mediocre research in social psychology had begun to drive out excellent studies of the personality. That in turn discouraged the submission of papers, and were that to continue, the study of the person would wither away. A political accommodation has now been reached, an uneasy one, but many of the leaders of personality research are pessimistic, and at least some have formed a separate society.

Listening to this account, a disinterested academic might well shrug his shoulders. He would remind you that disciplines, and topics within disciplines, have their ups and downs, coming out of nowhere, rising in popularity, then losing favor as interest moves elsewhere. He might go on to tell you that scientific change is both progessive and ineluctable, and that as we learn more we find current outlooks inadequate, so must replace them with better ones—more inclusive, more precise. The phrase he would use—now a cliche—is that we search for and find new paradigms, akin to the replacement of Newtonian by Einsteinian physics, or something equally grand. That mighty Clash of the Paradigms may for all I know be discerned in the highest reaches of the pure sciences, but alas that is not how and why change takes place in the social sciences. A topic or a conceptual theme or a methodology or a theoretical approach will be abandoned not because it has been disproved empirically, or because it is replaced by a more elegant and parsimonious model, but because . . . well, just because. It may fall out of favor for reasons having little to do with scientific merit. In some cases, we become tired of the topic, bored, and turn our attention elsewhere. Some of the time we sense there are better opportunities—for grants and publications, and public esteem—to be found in empirically virgin territories. These vagaries of fashion are at times impossible to predict, and even difficult to understand by hindsight. Just thirty years ago, Jean Piaget, the great child psychologist, was so demode—at least in this country—that most of my colleagues thought him at best a relic, someone who had outlived his time and reputation, and at least one believed him to be dead, that is, dead literally. Yet, five years later, his reputation began an ascent so astonishing and a triumph so complete as to erase for some time all intellectual competition in developmental studies. Why does it happen? One can think of a number of plausible reasons, but none truly compelling. Developmental psychology in America was ready to absorb and imitate Piaget in 1960, but there is no clear reason why it was not equally ready five or ten or fifteen years earlier.

I begin with this brief digression to anticipate the argument that personality theory died because it deserved to, that it outlived its usefulness and was superseded by better paradigms. My argument is that the rise and fall of reputation in most of the social sciences, most of the time, has little to do with merit, and tends much of the time to reflect changes in the larger cultural or ideological climate. In some instances, that is quite obvious: the rise of feminism has transformed the topic of sex differences from a sleepy backwater of our discipline to a hectic center, producing a glut of such studies, along with a reigning doctrine which both minimizes the importance of differences in gender, or sees them as the exclusive result of environmental pressures. In that latter respect, it is all too typical of what we now find throughout the social sciences—an emphasis on the environment, on the extrinsic, so intense and at moments so ferocious as to eliminate any attention to the inwardness of the person.

That, I believe, is what has been at work in the gradual death of personality theory. Some time in the 1960s, an unconscious collective decision was made, to this effect—that we have given too much attention to the individual, and to what is persistent in the individual, and too little to the social forces working on him. The very definition of personality involves traits, or other enduring, consistent tendencies of the person. To study personality means to study not a chameleon, but a relatively stable structure of internal tendencies. We are what we are over time. There is a recognizable similarity between the young adult at 25 and at 45 or 65. That seems the simplest common sense, and beyond that, it corresponds to our common experience. Why, then, would we resist that idea? Because to posit it is also to posit that evil or deficiency, once resident in the self, is likely to persist. We are dealing here with caricatures—no personality theory suggests that degree of rigidity. Nevertheless, it is the caricature which held sway in that unconscious collective choice. The idea of more-or-less fixed personal identity came to be a secular version of Original Sin. One is reminded here of Reinhold Niebuhr's acerbic observations of the pretensions of social science, above all its shallow optimism and its inability to grasp the genuine complexity of evil: "This persistent misunderstanding of human nature by modern psychologists and social scientists belongs to the deepest pathos of our age." That misunderstanding, I believe, can take many different forms, the most important of which during the last two decades was a denial of the idea of personality, that being a consequence of the feverish utopianism which overtook so much of the elite American culture, particularly the social sciences.

As it happens, during the 1960s I was asked to write up the yearly survey of research in personality published by the Annual Reviews series, and as it also happens, the article began by taking note of just this issue. "At one time, we thought of personality as a matter of enduring dispositions, but in recent years this definition has been under sharp attack. Some writers . . . question the generality and consistency of traits and of inner dispositions . . ." I then went on to point out that this had led to the inclusion of entirely transient states under the rubric of personality, which had in turn produced some confusion as to what was personality and what was social psychology. I had seen the cloud on the horizon, but with a characteristic lack of prescience had not discerned the storms to come—to wit, the rise of situationism.

Situationism is perhaps the most extreme form of the extrinsic theory of behavior. It disparages the importance of traits and of other internal structures influencing what we do. It says that yes, perhaps there are such things as traits, but these come and go, and in any case don't amount to much. If you were to ask a situationist why certain people are honest and others are not, you would be told that you were asking the wrong question, since honesty is largely a function of stimulus conditions. Were there temptations to be dishonest? Were there opportunities? What were other people doing? How was one expected to behave? And so on. And in support of that view, you would likely be treated to an account of a clever series of experiments showing the induction of virtue and vice.

Situationist studies of behavior cover the broadest spectrum—ranging from such impressionistic brilliances as Erving Goffmann's observations of closed institutions, to systematic studies of natural situations, to complex and intricately crafted experimental variations. Probably the most famous are the Milgram studies of coerced obedience, where ordinary persons are induced by a mixture of moral bullying and the force of authority to administer presumably painful electric shocks to strangers posing as experimental subjects. There is also a well known research in which ordinary American undergraduates, in an experimental setup, prove themselves to be nearly as vicious as guards at Auschwitz or the Gulag. In another famous study, a normal person placed in a mental hospital, and behaving normally, is assumed to be insane by the custodial staff, and treated as such. There are studies of bystander effects, determining under which conditions people will or will not intervene to aid a victim. And there are, as you might imagine, a great many experiments showing the situational sources of immorality.

Taken as a whole, this tradition of work is ingenious, therefore compelling, therefore persuasive. It is arguable whether the studies do indeed cast much light on the real-life processes they intend to duplicate—that is an issue not yet settled, and possibly not capable of being settled. What is not arguable is that this body of work has had the effect—indeed very likely the intention—of diminishing the felt importance of personality research. These studies mean to tell us that all of us can be led to behave in almost any way the experimenter wishes, even cruelly, that there is not that much to separate us from criminals, or madmen, or guards at concentration camps, or torturers—there, but for the grace of the stimulus conditions, go me and thee and the rest of us. Personality—that is, our traits, needs, ego functions, and above all our systems of conscience and guilt—all that has little to do with it.

Put so baldly, we begin to find this idea not quite believable—it violates much of our experience. Too many contrary instances spring to mind—where personality is remarkably steady over time, or where it overcomes circumstance decisively. We may remember, as an example of both, Anatoly Scharansky bouncing over that bridge in Berlin after a decade in the Gulag. To mention Scharansky risks being told that anecdotes are misleading, or that he is a special case, hence doesn't count. Yet the strongest case is made by systematic research showing an extraordinary stability in personality over long periods of time. The famous Guidance Studies carried out in Berkeley revealed most correlations in the .60-.70 range from the age of 12 to ages 40 and 50. Recent studies by Costa and McRae of adults show the same high level of consistency in measures of personality over time. To be sure, special circumstances may bend behavior, but personality, for better or for worse, persists and survives. These findings and others like them are as powerful as any we have in the entire field of psychology; and the indifference to them until recently reinforces one's suspicion that the current disdain for the study of the person has little to do with the merits of the case.

Such swings of emphasis usually have little effect outside the discipline; but in this instance, we see a strong influence on how social problems are understood and the public policy made. The recent masterwork of social science, Wilson and Herrnstein's *Crime and Human Nature* is, in part, an effort to restore some balance to a body of research and theory which had become sharply skewed toward the social, so much so that important findings on the psychology of crime had become subject to a sort of amnesia. We were persuaded to forget what we once knew, that the propensity to crime is shaped by how the child is reared, particularly by the inculcation of clear and firm standards of right and wrong, by internalizing a sense of responsibility, and by one's self-esteem becoming linked, at least in part, to the idea of one's virtue. Furthermore, the disposition to crime, once formed in youth, will continue into adulthood. The follow-up data on the well known study by the Gluecks taught us that those delinquent early in adolescence count for an enormous number of serious felonies by the time they are in their early 30s. These youngsters are poorly socialized, and weakly attached to others; both as children and as adults they are reckless, self-seeking, careless of the needs of others.

The bias against personality is found in other domains. In a forthcoming paper, Zucker and Gomberg assess the recent literature on the origins of alcoholism, and show quite clearly that a predisposition to problem drinking is visible fairly early in life; they also show a consistent effort in that literature to gloss over or reinterpret the evidence itself, so as to minimize the importance of early propensity. Other examples can be adduced. Many—by no means all—of the recent problems in secondary education are a partial result of increases in the number and proportion of disturbed or poorly socialized youngsters; yet most writing on the schools concentrate primarily on structural questions or technical issues in pedagogy.

No one will argue that social problems are grasped only by an exclusive focus on the individual—on personality and character, on the circumstances, largely in the family, which mold the person. Obviously, that is only a part of what we must understand. Yet social policy has been made as though the converse were true, as though individual variations in character—and what produces them—are illusory, irrelevant, of no moment. The savant tells us, gravely, that to solve this or that or the other social ill — crime, or illegitimacy, or illiteracy—we must attack "the root causes", which are invariably economic or sociological. That solemn voice is now heard less often, the emptiness of its message having become plain. We return, ever so slowly, to the difficult study of the person.

EDUCATING CHARACTER AS THE INTEGRATION OF CHOICE

Joel J. Kupperman

Edward Wynne and Herbert Walberg have recently argued that the development of students' characters both is conducive to, and is stimulated by, a successful academic program.[1] They are clearly right. In what follows I will offer a less directly empirical and more analytical account of what good character is. If this account is correct, then the promotion of good character requires some special educational strategies. The second part of this essay will suggest some strategies. It also should make it more understandable that the development of students' characters goes hand in hand with a successful academic program.

What Good Character Is

The most obvious point about good character is that it has something to do with good moral behavior: we normally think of someone who is honest and helpful to others, and who can be depended upon to do what she or he has promised, as having good character. It is very tempting to equate good character with the possession and mastery of an acceptable set of moral principles. But we should pause here. It has been far from clear to many of the philosophers who have studied these issues that being helpful to others is always, or even usually, a matter of following principles. Also we have to face the possibility that someone can accept a moral principle and fail to apply it to a case at hand. Sometimes this is a result of "weakness of will," in which in effect the moral agent does not care enough about following the principle. But sometimes a person may fail to notice that a case falls under a principle.[2] Especially disturbing are cases in which someone fails to think of an action, or of failing to do something, as in any way problematic. Much damaging behavior turns out to be the result of insensitivity rather than of a conscious choice to violate a principle.[3] Much of this can be summed up by the claim that the first step toward being a good person is to have a sense of what is ethically salient.[4]

There is a more fundamental difficulty for anyone who tries to understand good character in terms merely of someone's possessing and applying what we think are acceptable moral principles. It is this. Such a model treats people's ethical lives as if they consist of a series of essentially isolated choices. A moral agent, call her Jones, has a moral problem to confront; she reaches for a usable principle, solves her problem, and then, presumably, can relax and enjoy herself until the next moral problem comes along. There is something unrealistic in this picture of what it is to be a good person, more particularly because the depiction of Jones presents her as faceless and impersonal. It does not matter what she is like as a person, as long as she reaches for an acceptable principle and uses it. Nor will it matter whether the next moral choice that comes up confronts Jones or someone else: people who share an acceptable set of principles can be expected to behave in essentially the same way, and are morally interchangeable.

In the real world people lead lives that are much more integrated than this. People integrate their lives in a variety of ways, and not all of them are closely relevant to our subject. One way of integrating a life is in terms of a personality, a characteristic way of presenting oneself to other people.[3] The personalities that we like the most have charm, and when we say that someone has no personality we mean that he or she has no charm. Character can be contrasted to personality roughly as the inner to the outer, or as what you are to how you present yourself.

One way of understanding what character is is to look at a concept that has not received adequate attention in recent ethical philosophy, that of responsibility. This concept typically is deployed in two ways. One involves choices of how to judge previous choices. If I do something of which you do not approve, you may hold me responsible. Responsibility here is connected with blame and praise. There is a second use of the concept of responsibility though that helps us see more clearly how people's lives can be integrated—and this is the one that needs much more attention. Responsibility in this sense is something that one takes on, or should take on, in relation to other people, projects, institutions, values, etc. Responsibility in this sense involves, and should involve, commitment and (typically) concern.

We can understand this better if we take in some recurrent features of choices in the real world. Many real-life choices are not completed or finished immediately. Jones does X in order to accomplish Y, and then finds that X by itself does not guarantee Y: ongoing attention is required to secure Y. Alternatively, Jones by doing X accomplished Y, but then factors Z emerge that threaten Y, and Jones must give Y ongoing attention in order to secure or to protect it.

In either of these cases, to view Jones' relation to Y in terms of a set of discrete further choices is artificial and misleading. First, it is highly likely that what matters will be largely not further discrete choices as much as the quality of Jones' continuous attention or loyalty to Y. Secondly, to view Jones as having further choices to make with respect to Y which can be taken in isolation from one another and from the original choice is to leave out the crucial fact that Jones may have ***committed*** herself to Y. Thirdly, to the extent that Jones has a ***commitment*** to Y it is likely that further action with respect to Y will not present itself as involving a choice at all.

A person's ability to stay with, and to take responsibility for, choices is closely related to what we think of as good character. Jones' good character involves not only her behaving well at moments X, Y, and Z, but also that she sees the different parts of her life as integrated and takes seriously the connections among the things she does at X, Y, and Z. To have a good character is to have a life that is like a melody rather than a series of notes. Why do so many people have trouble in seeing this point?[6] The answer may have something to do with features of modern life that affect even educators: the fragmentation (so that so many things one does seem at first to have little connection with one another), the impersonality of so many of our contacts with others, and the heightened possibilities of instant gratification.

These features of modern life of course affect our students, and it may be that many of them have more difficulty in seeing how the various choices they make are interrelated, or in seeing their lives as an integrated whole, than did their great grandparents. Notice that we are not talking about moral principles here. We are not even talking, in any direct and straightforward way, about values. But our subject is cognitive skills that have a lot to do with someone's developing what most of us would consider to be good character.

None of this should be taken to deny that moral principles and values count for something in good character. Clearly they matter. One ingredient of good character has to be a tendency to apply acceptable moral principles and to reject unacceptable ones: we would not describe someone as having good character who believed that there is nothing wrong with torture and who tortured others when given a chance. But the argument thus far has shown that there are many other ingredients of good character. Good character requires also an ability to pick out situations that are ethically problematic, and an ability to realize which features of these situations are salient. Thoughtlessness and insensitivity can be as dangerous as old-fashioned wickedness. Good character also requires concern, so that what is picked out as ethically salient matters. Finally, it requires commitment, so that there is integrated long-term loyalty to values, projects, etc. This commitment, together with concern for what one is committed to, will count (if appropriately directed) as a sense of responsibility.

Now that we have outlined what good character is, we can ask how education can promote good character.

Education of Character

If we were to focus on the first ingredient of good character in the list above, it would be easy to get trapped in a debate about how neutral public schools have to be in presenting value judgments. Simplistic approaches abound: at one extreme there are those who simply want us to teach the moral truth, period, and at the other extreme are those who insist on complete neutrality on all issues of value. A less simplistic approach is to distinguish between subjects of ongoing controversy, matters about which decent people might disagree, and subjects (such as the wrongness of torture or of racism) which can be regarded as essentially settled even if here and there people can be found who think of the moral earth as flat.[7] For the present purposes I would like to sidestep this controversy, though. My present point is that the most glaring and widespread deficiencies in the education of character are to be found, not in relation to the first ingredient, but in relation to ingredients further down the list.

Let me suggest that large numbers of students get into trouble or encounter difficulty in their lives not so much because they are armed with unacceptable moral principles as because they have not learned some basic facts of moral life. Among these are the following:

Fact 1 One thing leads to another. (The choices you have to make tomorrow will have a lot to do with the choices you make today.)

Fact 2 Many crucial choices are made by people who are not at their best and do not have a lot of time for thought. (The choice that a teenager who has had too much to drink makes of whether or not to drive illustrates both this and the preceding fact of moral life.)

Fact 3 Some of life's biggest problems occur not because anyone willed them to happen, but because of carelessness.

Fact 4 Many important decisions in people's lives are not felt as decisions: people may drift in a certain direction, or may do what is expected of them without thinking about it.

Fact 5 People's satisfactions with their lives, and their sense that their lives are "meaningful," seem to have a great deal to do with whether their lives are organized around a set of integrated commitments.

All of these are facts about the structure through time of people's lives, and of the way in which what is chosen (or done thoughtlessly or carelessly) now can constrict or open up choices later. These facts also point to the way in which much of ethical life is preparation. If Jones is prepared she can choose well even when she is not at her best; she will not be careless when it counts; and she will be ready to take control of her life instead of drifting.

How can we teach these things in public schools? It might seem to some that the features of good character that I have been pointing to are so special as to call for a special course in ethics in the schools. Such a course could have it uses; but my own view is that the education of character can be accomplished well without such a course, if other kinds of courses are taught in an appropriate way, and if the educational program as a whole is run well. Before I explain these points, though, I should say a little about how *not* to educate character. It is easy to misinterpret what character is, and because of this to lead students in the wrong direction. One inappropriate model of the education of character especially must be exposed.

This can emerge as follows. I have been suggesting that concerns and commitments are key elements of character. On any plausible view, a virtuous person (someone of good character) will be concerned about the well-being of other sentient beings. It is easy (albeit simple-minded) to translate this into terms of feelings, and also to set a high requirement, so that it is thought that the goal of ethical education is to enable people to have intense feelings of warmth and concern for others as much of the time as possible, and to have feelings of a contrary sort as little of the time as possible.

This is the sentimentalist's view of ethical education, and it leads to self-deception and dishonesty. It also leads to concentration on what is relatively inessential in the attainment of virtue. If someone occasionally has hostile feelings toward others, and often cannot muster up feelings that correspond to "Have a nice day!", that should be taken as a sign of normalcy rather than one of a less than good character. Development of the concerns that we associate with great virtue is more a matter of which of our feelings we engage with, and which we disengage from, action than of a purification and general sweetening of feelings. No doubt someone of good character is likely to have fewer hostile feelings than a person of unformed character, but this is secondary to the way in which the feelings and attitudes of a virtuous person are organized and brought into play. It also has to be said that strong and persistent feelings that run counter to our actions must be taken as a psychological danger signal. But having conceded this, I wish to re-emphasize that virtue is much more a matter of how our feelings are engaged with, or disengaged from, action than of the minute-to-minute character of feelings; and the criteria for concern, too, in large part have to do with how we act. Attention to relevant detail is also a sign of concern: if A has assumed a responsibility to bring about or to protect Y, then A should take the trouble to notice (and take care of) whatever will promote Y and also to notice (and defend against) whatever will undermine Y. No steady current of pro-Y feeling can compensate for a failure in this.[8]

Again we come back to the idea that good character has to do with how someone apprehends, and is engaged with, the real world. Students must learn the ways in which commitments structure a life, as well as getting a sense of what a life is like that is relatively devoid of commitments or in which commitments have been ignored or betrayed. They must develop a clear vision of how actions, or inaction, or carelessness, can structure the future course of a life. Biographies, along with some other literary and historical works, can convey all of this very well. In schools in which English and history teachers are not shy about talking about meanings and values, a great deal that is relevant to ethics can be learned.

School subjects beyond English and history can have their use. This may seem a very peculiar thing to say, but I am convinced that the quality of a school's physical education program, along with the programs in art and music, is important in the kind of learning relevant to ethics that goes on. Many teenagers draw a contrast between the world of work and social obligation on one hand, and play, spontaneity, and relaxation on the other, which they think of as essentially unstructured and thoughtless. This contrast, sharply drawn, is both over-simple and dangerous. One thing that students can learn in a good physical education program is that play is better when it is not unstructured and thoughtless, and that in sports one can be relaxed and still be prepared for what might happen next. Good art and music programs also can convey that what is free and spontaneous can benefit from thought and intelligence, and that there are standards of quality that apply even in those areas.

The most crucial element in the education of character is of course a sense of responsibility. Students should be led to expect to live with, and to deal with (and not try to ignore) the consequences of their choices. This in turn requires a number of factors. One is that students gain enough self-respect so that they can take pride in standing by their choices. Anonymity is the enemy of responsibility, and to feel that one is a recognizable individual who can be and should be held to account is the first step toward a sense of responsibility. It may be that one reason why academically excellent programs go hand in hand with the development of character is that schools that care about academic performance also take the trouble to know who their students are. An academically excellent program is also going to be one that presents students with genuine challenges, ones that create the correlative possibilities of achievement and failure. (That achievement is not possible unless failure is also possible needs to be stressed, and is relevant to what follows.) Presumably such a program will also recognize achievement, thus strengthening the self-respect of those who have responded to challenges. It is hard to see how students could acquire much self-respect in a program in which everything is easy or in which the challenges are not made meaningful.

A second factor is sensitivity to what the consequences of one's actions are, and to what threatens or supports the things to which one is committed. No one can be held to have a developed sense of responsibility who is obtusely unaware of major consequences of his or her actions or of countervailing forces. Thus responsibility requires sensitivity, or at least a fair degree of awareness of the world. Immorality does not require insensitivity, but it is made much easier by it: in a great many cases people who behave immorally turn out to have a severely limited awareness of the feelings or the likely outlines of the future lives of their victims. An ethics course might have the beneficial effect of helping students to be more sensitive to the consequences or the context of their actions, but much the same effect can be achieved in English literature classes if novels and plays are taught as, among other things, stories about life.

Finally, one test of responsibility—and an acid test of character—is the recognition of failure. The possibility of failure is something that many students have no real acquaintance with until they are out of school, and by then it may be too late for some to get used to the idea that this is a feature of the real world. Virtually everyone though will fail at some point in life, and people who care about achievement run especial risks of failure. All of this is true even in the moral sphere: the most virtuous person will at some point have let someone down. The moral to be drawn is not one of despair or of risk-avoidance. It is that there is life after failure; and that the appropriate response is, first, to take responsibility—to be open and honest about the failure—and secondly to redouble one's efforts. A student is not likely to learn this lesson through a drastic failure, which indeed can be so discouraging as to be counterproductive. But a school that cares about academic excellence is likely to expose even very good students to the possibility of small and reversible failures. It can be, I submit, character-building to be told that a paper was not good enough and will have to be rewritten, or that a homework assignment will have to be redone. But a school that does this must also take care to make students feel good about themselves when they do their best. It is character-building to come to feel that one's best deserves respect.

The Main Points

Let me summarize my main points about how character has been overlooked or misunderstood. Some philosophers, and many practitioners of moral education as well, have viewed moral life as a series of separated, primarily rational decisions. There is some truth to elements of this picture, and certainly one does not want to deny the importance of principles in ethics. But the picture leaves out the roles in decision that are played by perception, psychological preparation, and an individual's concern and commitment; above all, it leaves out the ways in which decisions usually are, and should be, connected in a person's life. An appreciation of what good character is should lead naturally to a less intellectualized kind of moral education. Less emphasis should be placed on what a student says he or she would do in certain abstractly formulated hypothetical cases. More emphasis should be placed on who the student is coming to be. This should include a variety of tactics, employed in various kinds of school activities, to encourage self-respect and a sense of responsibility. Students also should be helped to learn something that is difficult to realize at an early age: that lives typically have a structure shaped by early choices, and that commitments or their absence have an important effect on the quality of a life. A school that enables students to gain a realistic picture of how lives are structured through time will have accomplished a great deal.

NOTES

[1] Edward A. Wynne and Herbert J. Walberg, "The Complementary Goals of Character Development and Academic Excellence," *Educational Leadership*, December 1985/January 1986.

[2] Immanuel Kant has claimed that moral laws "require a power of judgment sharpened by experience, partly in order to decide in what cases they apply and partly to procure them an access to man's will and an impetus to their practice." See his *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1959), p. 5.

[3] One of the strengths of Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982) is her rendering of the ways in which her subjects assign ethical importance to sensitivity—and to a sense of responsibility.

[4] For a provocative discussion of salience as a factor in ethical judgment, see John McDowell, "Virtue and Reason," *Monist*, 1979.

[5] A useful introductory discussion of the difference between character and personality is to be found in Anthony Quinton, *Thoughts and Thinkers* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982), pp. 21-26, "Character in Real Life."

[6] The blindness extends to the misreading of philosophy: the two modern philosophers, Hume and Sartre, who have most strongly emphasized the ways in which a person's life involves the construction of an integrat [illegible] elf, have been the most persistently misinterpreted. For a good discussion of [illegible] feature of Hume's work, see Annette Baier, "Hume on Heaps and Bundle [illegible] *merican Philosophical Quarterly*, 1979. See also my "Character and Self-Kn [illegible] ge," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (London), 1984-5.

[7] See my "Why Some Topics Are Controversial," *Educational Leadership*, December 1984/January 1985.

[8] It may be likely that extremely virtuous people are more likely to be careful and preoccupied than to have warm smiles on their faces and twinkles in their eyes. Proust suggested this, in his comments on Giotto's depictions of personified virtues. "Later on, when in the course of my life, I have had occasion to meet with, in convents for instance, literally saintly examples of practical charity, they have generally had the brisk, decided, and slightly brutal air of a busy surgeon, the face in which one can discern no commiseration, no tenderness at the sight of suffering humanity, and no fear of hurting it, the face devoid of gentleness or sympathy, the sublime face of true goodness." See *Swann's Way*, "Combray," trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 62.

[9] Much of my work on character as an ethical category was begun during the spring and summer of 1985 when I was a visiting fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. I am grateful to my Oxford colleagues for their hospitality. I also wish to thank Jonathan Bennett, R. M. Hare, Loren Lomasky, Lynn Paine, Henry Rosemont, Jr. and L. W. Sumner for their comments on a longer paper, principally concerned with the place of character in ethical theory, from which the present paper takes off.

CHARACTER EDUCATION AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS: THE QUESTION OF CONTEXT

Richard A. Baer, Jr.

Dr. David Pepi, a former graduate student of mine, relates in his Ph.D. dissertation an experience which I will long remember. One summer he was working for a silversmith polishing bowls and vases—in Vermont, I believe. He worked hard, but his polishing was uneven.

Towards the end of the third day, the silversmith turned to David and simply asked: "Do you know what you are doing?" "Yes, of course," David replied. "I'm polishing bowls and vases." "But do you *really* know what you're doing?," the silversmith asked. "Yes, I'm taking scratches out of these bowls and vases," David replied.

"Ah," said the silversmith. "That's why your polishing is so uneven. You really don't know what you're doing. Polishing silver is not taking scratches *out* of things. In fact, it's just the opposite. It's putting scratches *into* things—first very rough scratches, then finer ones, and finally extremely fine ones. If you think you're taking scratches out of these bowls, you will always focus on the scratches more than on the rest of the bowl, and your work will be spotty. But if you realize that your job is to put scratches into the bowls, you will give equal attention to every part of the bowl, and your work will be successful."

David, a good listener and a quick learner, soon was turning out vases and bowls hardly distinguishable from those polished by the silversmith himself.

David's story teaches us very nicely that theory and knowing what we are doing are very important for success. It also helps us see that some things in life are not exactly what they seem to be—not that they are necessarily more complex (although that too is the case sometimes)—but that they are different from what we thought.

My guess is that something like this may be true of our thinking about the controversial topic of moral education and character development in public schools. So, let me begin my analysis with a few clarifications and definitions of the sort that may help us see more clearly where we are going.

First of all, I approach this subject not just as an educator but also as a Christian. The importance of my Christian beliefs will become clearer as my argument progresses. As an educator, I am deeply committed to public education, but I understand the term "public" to include any school—government or nongovernment—which meets the state's minimum compelling interest in education. This minimum interest includes the ability to read, write, and do some math, and also a basic understanding of American history and governmental institutions. A "public" school also must not discriminate on the basis of race or national origin.

The term "research" in our symposium title should be understood broadly so that it includes any careful and systematic inquiry into a subject. It definitely should not be limited to social science research but should also include the humanities—philosophy, religion, ethics, and so forth.

If my comments on public policy are to make sense, it is also essential that I lay on the table my understanding of the term "the public interest." I reject the position of those theorists who hold that the public interest is simply what comes out of the process of conflict among special interest groups and who see the role of the planner or manager as a kind of neutral umpire in this process. I also reject any stance which mainly emphasizes public opinion polls or, in cases like park and recreation management, what is sometimes called "satisfaction research." In a liberal democratic republic, special interests and public opinion should not (and, indeed, cannot) be ignored in formulating policy. But I would argue that policy should also take account of legal, historical, moral, religious, and philosophical dimensions of who we are as a people and of our understanding of justice and quality. The interplay of these various factors is dynamic and can never be captured in any simple formula. But they are all important, and they are all legitimate. If the moral dimension is excluded, we will simply have a tyranny of the majority (or of one or more powerful minorities), for theoretically even the Constitution can be changed in such a way that it would no longer protect the justice and equity interests of particular minorities.

I am interpreting the term "character education" broadly as a rough synonym for moral education. I mean it to include basic instruction in morality, role modeling, analysis of ethical situations, and reflection on the religious, philosophical, and morally relevant aspects of the world in which we live.

When we use the phrase "our common moral heritage" in discussions of values and education, we should not permit this expression to obscure the fact that Americans differ substantially on many important moral questions. And, even more importantly, Americans interpret morality and live out their moral lives with the help of widely different world views—even when they share the same basic moral principles or adhere to the same rules.

THE STRUCTURE OF OUR PRESENT SYSTEM OF "PUBLIC" SCHOOLS

Any sophisticated approach to the subject at hand will require that we take into account the basic structure of America's system of "public" schools. These features are especially important:

1. It is a monopoly system with a captive student audience. More precisely, public schools have monopoly access to government funding. As Professor Stephen Arons, Director of the Department of Legal Studies at the University of Massachusetts writes, we have "a system of school finance that provides free choice for the rich and compulsory socialization for everyone else."[1]

2. America's public schools are ***government*** schools. They are operated by employees of government, and access to these schools is severely limited to the public. Berkeley law professor John E. Coons correctly notes that our better public schools are "functionally private in the sense that access is closely linked to the family's purchasing power and thus to its ability to exit" (neighborhoods with poor schools).[2]

3. It is a myth to think of America's government schools as operating under the control of parents or as being basically a system of local schools. Most of the important curricular decisions are made by state bureaucrats and are deeply influenced by textbook publishers, schools of education, and others outside of the local scene.

4. America's government schools, are not, as is often stated, free marketplaces of ideas. Books and curricular materials are chosen not by students or parents but by agents of the state. This fact is particularly important to keep in mind in discussing so-called censorship cases.[3]

CAN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS BE NEUTRAL IN VALUES AND RELIGION?

My judgment is that moral education in government schools is bound to stir up endless controversy and dissent if the public perceives that these schools are giving unfair advantage to a particular set of beliefs and values and putting other widely-held beliefs and values at a state-sponsored disadvantage. Most educators today agree that a school cannot be altogether neutral in the realm of values.

But is it possible for government schools to be completely or even substantially neutral towards religion? I think not. To be sure, they can be neutral in the limited sense that they do not prefer one religion over another, say, Presbyterianism over Judaism or Catholicism. But in no way can they be completely neutral towards religion as over against non-religion. It is widely held that if a school rigorously maintains its secularity and does not show favoritism towards a particular religion, it can then be considered to be neutral towards religion. I find this belief untenable. It overlooks the fact that a secular curriculum must either be a totally random and chaotic affair or else it must rest on a variety of debatable assumptions about the nature of human beings and the good life—many of which function like and directly compete with traditional religious beliefs.

Thomas Jefferson thought that his own Unitarian/Deistic morality and religion were nonsectarian and were based on science, reason, and common sense. He considered the beliefs of Orthodox Christians, on the other hand, to be sectarian. They were based on revelations, dogma, and superstition. This position is not convincing, for Jefferson's beliefs were just as much based on questionable assumptions about human beings and the good life as were the beliefs of orthodox Christians. Thus his conviction that his kind of belief ought to inform the public life of the republic but that the orthodox Christians should practice their religion in private rests on untenable philosophical analysis.[4]

Similarly, I consider the distinction between the religious and the secular—as it functions in most school debates today—to be false. Or, more precisely, the secular in education typically becomes secularism, and takes on a kind of "religious" life of its own. John Dewey said of his own atheistic, humanistic philosophy and morality: "Here are all the elements for a religious faith that shall not be confined to sect, class or race . . . . It remains to make it explicit and military."[5] Atheistic humanists with considerable frequency referred to their own philosophical beliefs as "religious" up until the post-World War II period. Perhaps it is more than coincidence that this is the same period during which the Supreme Court began to push religious practices out of government schools.

Even if particularly objectionable materials like Values Clarification and some of the more tendentious sex education materials were to be eliminated from the curriculum of the government school, this would not mean that the school would be religiously neutral. This is because the development of a curriculum depends on one's world view and vision of the good life. If a curriculum emphasizes math and science and other courses which will help one become economically competent in a capitalist society, the result will be far different than if it emphasizes courses which help the student learn greater respect for the delicate ecological balances of the earth, or deepen her sense of social justice, or help her learn to know more about God and the life of prayer. There simply is no way that a curriculum can be religiously neutral in these respects—unless it were a completely random and thus quite useless affair.

The U.S. Supreme Court has largely misunderstood this philosophical point. By pushing religion out of the schools, it has not made them more neutral, for a variety of secular and humanistic beliefs and values have replaced the older religious beliefs and values. There is such a thing as "censorship by omission," as blacks, women, Native Americans, and other minorities well know. To ignore something (not to talk about it or consider it as important in the curriculum) is to take a stand as to its value. New York University professor Paul C. Vitz presents convincing data that textbooks used in government schools present an extremely distorted picture of the place of religion in American culture—by almost totally ignoring it.[6]

Some educators loosely refer to rational values or to ethics based on science and reason. Sidney Hook argues, in effect, that government schools should teach humanistic values because these are based on reason and science, but they should not present Christian values, for these rest on superstition, revelation, and dogma.[7] This position is not convincing. As in the case of Jefferson, Hook's views are based on debatable assumptions about human nature and the nature of the good society just as much as are Christian views. Kai Nielson puts the matter tersely when he argues that "rationality . . . underdetermines morality."[8]

OUR COMMON MORAL HERITAGE AND THE QUESTION OF FRAMEWORK OR CONTEXT

Americans hold many ethical beliefs in common, but how they justify their acceptance of these beliefs and how they see them becoming effective in the lives of individuals varies a great deal. To try to teach morality or foster character development in government schools without talking about these framework beliefs may result in considerable distortion of the total moral situation.

For instance, in Judaism and Christianity, morality is typically understood in such a way that the indicative regularly precedes the imperative. In Jewish terms, the Preface to the Decalogue precedes the individual commandments. In Christian terms, Gospel precedes Law. This means that particular ethical commands receive their full meaning only within the context of basic beliefs about the love and mercy and justice of God. Moral rules are not just rules, but in a deeper sense they spell out the kind of life it is *possible* to live in a world where God sets one free from bondage—bondage to Pharoah or bondage to sin. The ethic becomes a statement of freedom and possibility; it is never simply a moral or legal code.

The framework is also important in terms of motivation and empowerment. As a Christian, one wants to live justly and honestly out of grateful response to the love of God which she has experienced in her past history. And living the good life becomes possible for the Christian because of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Christian ethics also depends a great deal on relationship—first of all the relationship of the individual to God and secondarily to other persons. Thus it is not surprising that Christian ethics has much to say about sin and forgiveness, estrangement, and reconciliation. Overall, it focuses less on abstract rights and rational analysis than do most systems of philosophical ethics.

If this analysis is correct, then it is easy to see why failing to deal with framework beliefs can, for the Jew or Christian, only result in a distortion of ethics and of the way in which morality functions in the lives of individuals and communities.

DELIGHT AS THE BASIS OF RIGHT USE; THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PROPER VISION

Another way of stating some of the preceding points would be to say that Christian ethics (as is also true of some philosophical ethics) pays a good deal of attention to the matter of *seeing the world correctly*. St. Thomas Aquinas, for instance, argues that "delight is the basis of right use." The comment is similar to a statement of Robert Frost: "A poem begins in delight and ends in wisdom." In other words, learning to appreciate things in such a way that we delight in them is a major part of learning to treat them properly.[9] If one understands that human beings are created in the image of God, this rules out many kinds of behavior towards others as inappropriate. The child who comes to understand and appreciate the rich beauty and complexity of nature is in a much better position to treat nature properly than the child who lacks this basic understanding.[10]

Christian ethics raises fundamental questions about what it means for human beings to be free. It holds that sin makes slaves of us, and that only as our lives come into proper relation to God will we be truly free. And freedom is dependent on having a correct vision of reality. The neurotic individual, because of a distorted vision of himself and others, cannot act with true freedom. Nor can the alcoholic, the drug addict, or the child abuser. All are more or less bound by destructive past experiences. Ethics, then, is not simply asking about proper behavior or about the correct principles of justice (although these questions are extremely important). It is also learning to know and understand reality in such a way that we become *free* to live the good life.[11]

MORAL EDUCATION AND ROLE MODELING

Although I am not familiar with empirical research on the topic, ordinary human experience suggests that people learn to become good people not just through talking about goodness and through learning proper rules of conduct but through the process of apprenticeship and initiation—just as Ph.D. scientists learn to become good scientists through the same processes. Morality is not just taught; it is caught.

This forces us to raise the question of whether a school can effectively teach students our common moral heritage or engage in character education if the school has only very limited freedom to require that teachers be appropriate role models both inside and outside the school. For instance, can a school effectively teach teenagers sexual responsibility, including basic respect for members of the opposite sex, if their teachers—in their lives outside of the school—do not model such responsibility and respect? If a teacher regularly treats women as sexual objects and displays strong hatred of women as total persons in his extra-school life, and if this behavior is publicly and widely known, is it possible for this teacher to be truly effective in teaching children to be sexually responsible?

Liberalism has strongly emphasized the private/public dichotomy, and this distinction has helped protect citizens from an over-zealous and intrusive state. But if schools want truly to help students mature in the moral life, may it not be the case that we will have to reexamine this entire issue in relation to education? My understanding of persons is that it is impossible for an individual to live out her life in watertight compartments. Thus if a person is a racist or sexually exploitative, this person sooner or later will display these values and beliefs in the classroom, even if only in very subtle ways. Do schools currently have sufficient authority not to hire or to fire people whose lives outside of school work against the values of the common moral heritage? If government schools were to focus more on character education, who would take the initiative in this? All teachers? Or a particular group of teachers, perhaps mainly in history, literature, and other areas of the humanities? And what about certification problems? Do we want the state establishing who is qualified to teach morality and foster character development and who is not? What criteria would the state employ? All of these are difficult and troublesome questions.

The high degree of age group stratification which we find in most schools may also work against character development. Such a pattern gives great influence to a peer group which is homogeneous age-wise, and makes easy relationships with older and younger students, not to mention with people from the wider community, an almost nonexistent part of ordinary school education. What the individual student can learn from this narrow peer group that will be valuable for character development probably will be limited in scope, even though it makes a strong impression on the student. And much of what is learned may be counterproductive in regard to the kind of character the school wants to encourage.

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS REGARDING SCHOOL POLICY AND A RESEARCH AGENDA

It is imperative that we frankly and openly face up to strains and contradictions which exist in our moral heritage. Robert Bellah in *The Broken Covenant* points to the tensions that are in American culture between interest, on the one hand, and covenant or republican civic virtue, on the other hand.[12] To ignore such tensions would be only to distort who we are as people.

At the very least, any successful attempt to deal with moral education (including what we might more narrowly call character education) in government schools will demand a good deal more compromise and openness to genuine diversity in American culture than government schools hitherto have shown. From the beginning, our system of government schools has been experienced as oppressive by various minorities. Horace Mann wanted the common schools to foster the liberal Unitarian/Protestant views which he accepted as both true and nonsectarian, and to eschew the sectarian and dogmatic beliefs of orthodox Christians. The schools as a whole were very prejudicial to Catholics, to Jews, to atheists, and to other minorities throughout the 19th and much of the 20th centuries. And today, conservative Catholics and Evangelical Protestants argue—correctly, I think—that the schools have become discriminatory towards their beliefs and have come to favor secular and humanistic beliefs and values.[13]

Schools would need to make clear that we are a diverse people with diverse beliefs and values and yet at the same time not wrongly interpret this diversity as constituting a validation of the position of cultural relativism or ethical subjectivism. Also, teachers would need to find ways to present clearly the commonalities which exist in our moral heritage.

Courses in ethics often make the mistake of focusing mainly on ethical dilemmas and on very difficult cases. This is unfortunate, for it gives students the false impression that almost everything in ethics is either vague or controversial, and that Americans disagree much more than they agree about ethical matters. But, of course, this is not at all the case. We would not be able to function effectively as a society if we did not agree on most questions pertaining to ordinary circumstances. Students sometimes come away from a course in ethics with a sense of the cleverness of the teacher in analyzing tough moral dilemmas, but they do not get a realistic sense of the overall power of a system of ethics to shape character and to resolve or at least illuminate a very broad range of human situations.

Perhaps the best opportunity to help children to learn to respect and love our republic is precisely at the point of making clear that our form of government is truly committed to allowing people of different beliefs and values to coexist—not just as individuals but also as groups. I believe that the best way to show this would be to move with all deliberate speed to disestablish the monopoly government schools currently enjoy in access to public funding of education. Such disestablishment, with its resultant increase in freedom of choice and strong witness to the state's respect for the right of each diverse tradition to survive and flourish through its children, would, in my judgment, in itself convey the most powerful message about the morality of our common heritage that it would be possible to convey. It would be a powerful reaffirmation of the meaning of the First Amendment. It would testify to the fact that because education, as over against instruction, is always a matter of the total person, including one's deepest spiritual, religious, and philosophical beliefs, government does not have the right to force parents—notably those without independent economic means—to submit their children to the state and to a system of education which works against their deepest beliefs. It would witness to the fact that education should never be under majoritarian control in a democratic and pluralistic society which claims as part of its basic tradition the Bill of Rights—except in the limited sense of the state defining what it sees as its minimum compelling interest in the education of children.

And this interest, I believe, should be defined in education—as in freedom of speech, press, and religion cases—in terms of the doctrine of the less burdensome (or less drastic) means.

The need to transmit our common moral heritage to our children and to shape their character is obvious. The danger is that we will be so taken with a sense of the need that we will overlook the ways in which attempting to meet the need could create an injustice of its own. That is, by assuming that there is greater homogeneity in the tradition than actually exists, and particularly by neglecting to take account of the different ways morality becomes operative in the lives of various individuals and communities, the state may do violence to the pluralism which is such a notable feature of our society. And in so doing, it is at least possible that the whole scheme would backfire—producing not greater loyalty to the larger community and the state but rather a stronger sense of being victims of a majority that insists on foisting its values on dissenting religious and ideological minorities.

Fascist and Marxist states have typically believed that control is better than trust, but our American political experiment is more sympathetic to the principle that trust is better than control. It would be tragic if now—in our commendable attempt to develop character and counter students' ignorance of our common moral heritage—we instituted programs in government schools which were seen by dissenting minorities as working against their own continued uniqueness and existence. The genius of our policy is that we have been willing to allow people to make mistakes—sometimes big mistakes. Rather than defining state interest in maximal terms we have—in matters of religion and morality—sought to allow individuals and particular traditions to make their own choices as long as these did not violate the state's compelling interest.

I can only hope that such wisdom will prevail in the future!

NOTES

[1] Stephen Arons, *Compelling Belief: The Culture of American Schooling*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983, p. 211.

[2] John E. Coons, "A Question of Access," *Independent School*, February 1985, p. 6.

[3] For a much fuller treatment of the structure of our system of government schools, and particularly of the question of censorship, see Richard A. Baer, Jr., *Censorship and the Public Schools*, Milwaukee: The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, 1985, pp. 1-37.

[4] See Rockne McCarthy, Donald Oppewal, Walfred Peterson, and Gordon Spykman, *Society, State, and Schools: A Case for Structural Pluralism*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1981; also Rockne McCarthy, James W. Skillen, and William Harper, *Disestablishment a Second Time: Genuine Pluralism for American Schools*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Christian University Press, 1982.

[5] John Dewey, *A Common Faith*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934, p. 87.

[6] Paul C. Vitz, "Religion and Traditional Values in Public School Textbooks: An Empirical Study," unpublished N.I.E. report (to appear in book form in the fall of 1985).

[7] Sidney Hook, "Is Secular Humanism a Religion?," *The Humanist*, September/October 1976, pp. 5-7.

[8] Kai Nielsen, "On Needing a Moral Theory: Rationality, Considered Judgments and the Grounding of Morality," *Philosophy*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (April 1982), pp. 105, 114. See also Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 103-200.

[9] See Bernard E. Meland, *Higher Education and the Human Spirit*, Chicago: Seminary Cooperative Bookstore, Inc., 1953. Note particularly his concept of "the appreciative consciousness" (pp. 62, 63, 68, 77).

[10] Proverbs 12:10 reads (R.S.V.): "A righteous man has regard for the life of his beast, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel." It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word which is translated "has regard for" literally means "to know." The New English Bible appropriately translates the word in question "cares for." All of this suggests a close connection between genuine knowledge or appreciation and appropriate ethical response.

[11] See Stanley Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue: Essays in Christian Ethical Reflection*, Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981 (1974), pp. 30-47. Hauerwas gives extensive references to the work of Iris Murdoch, from whom he borrows many of these ideas.

[12] Robert N. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial*, New York: The Seabury Press, 1975, pp. 1-35.

[13] See Richard A. Baer, Jr., "'Cosmos,' Cosmologies, and the Public Schools," *This World*, Spring/Summer 1983, No. 5, pp. 5-17.

THE USE OF LITERATURE IN CHARACTER FORMATION

William Kirk Kilpatrick

Until recent times it was believed that one learned to be good by imitating good people. And if these good people could not always be found among one's family or neighbors, they could always be found in stories: stories from *The Iliad* and *Odyssey*, from *The Bible*, from the lives of saints, from the Arthurian legends, from plays, poems, biographies and histories.

Of course, these good people didn't always act well. Sometimes they behaved very badly. Achilles was excessively cruel, Peter was cowardly, Paul was an accomplice to murder, Lancelot and Guinevere committed adultery. But in these stories there is no doubt how they should have acted.

Good stories entertained but they also instructed. They showed men and women how to behave. Here, said the story, are the characters: here they are acting well, and here they are not. Act like them when they behave nobly; when they behave ignobly learn to avoid their folly. The telling and the hearing of stories was, among other things, an exercise by which people reminded one another of their common nature with its limitations and necessary standards and obligations.

In contrast to this older tradition, current approaches to moral education put the stress not on stories and standards but on dilemmas and discussions. In place of stories young people are exposed to ethical dilemmas or case histories. For example, one frequently used dilemma asks students to decide on the fate of passengers in an overcrowded lifeboat; another asks them to debate the merits of spouse swapping. Discussion of such cases is supposed to either a) help the student clarify his own values or b) help the student develop moral reasoning skills.

This new approach which, following the lead of one critic, I will call the quandary approach, has been criticized on several counts: that it neglects habit formation, that it fosters ethical relativism, that it conditions children to be neutral about things they shouldn't be neutral about, that it really isn't a neutral approach but a subtle form of indoctrination.

Most of the criticism can be summed up by observing that the quandary approach provides no moral content. Each individual is expected to discover his own content or set of values. The actual content of one's moral choice is quite secondary to the process by which one arrives at a choice. For example, the seven step "valuing process" used in Values Clarification curriculums, contains items such as "prizing and cherishing one's beliefs," "publicly affirming one's beliefs when appropriate," "acting on one's beliefs," etc.,—all very fine until one pauses to reflect that a Hitler or a Stalin could describe their own valuing process in exactly the same terms. Likewise, Carol Gilligan's study of the moral decision making process is based on interviews with women who (with a few exceptions) chose to have abortions. The idea that we can learn about the process of making moral decisions from women who, from a traditional standpoint, made an immoral decision is ironic to say the least.

But, of course, it is only ironic if you think that moral decisions ought to be based on objective criteria of right and wrong. Thanks to the quandary approach much of our society does not think that way any more. In the absence of such objective criteria, however, people do not ordinarily *develop* their own values, they simply *adopt* the prevailing ones. And, in matters of morality, we seem increasingly to take our cues from the prevailing consensus of social scientists. It is, not surprisingly, a constantly shifting consensus. Because so many social scientists are wedded to the processes rather than content, they have no objective criteria to restrain or guide them.

How far can the consensus shift? Theoretically, there are no limits. For example, although social scientists currently decry the practice of child sexual abuse there is no intrinsic reason why, at some future date, they will not accept it and even encourage it. This possibility is not nearly as unlikely as it might appear at first blush. Many types of behavior that were thought perverted or debased forty years ago became, once they were 'explained' by social scientists, a matter for casual tolerance or acceptance. In the past, faced with certain intractable behaviors (such as homosexuality) therapists have tended to give up on changing sexual orientation and have attempted instead to "educate" the public to accept the behavior. And we, like the frog that boils to death in a gradually heated pot of water, can be gradually desensitized to our normal responses and repugnancies. Even the stoutest among us will have momentary attacks of doubt on hearing for the six hundredth time that our views are unenlightened. And, indeed many plausible reasons could be advanced for the cause of incest. There is a certain type of social science rationality which, although it is completely divorced from sanity, nevertheless passes muster as being reasonable. It could be argued, for example that given the kind of culture we *now* have, activities such as incest may be harmful, but there is no reason why society couldn't be restructured along other lines so that such practices would actually be beneficial. After all, it could be argued, sex is the greatest pleasure. Who are we to deprive children of their right to sexual pleasure? And who better qualified to initiate children into this wonderful experience than those adults who care for them the most?

If this still sounds like an implausible scenario, bear in mind that it wouldn't be *called* sexual abuse. It would be given a new name, something redolent of scientific validity. "Consensual incest" and "positive incest" have already been suggested. I imagine that the final formulation will be something along the lines of "encouraging intergenerational intimacy."

The point is, the social sciences are not attached to any moral mooring place. One can never tell in which direction they will next drift. But how to keep from drifting with them? Rationality alone is not a sufficient protection. Indeed, rationality by itself is part of the problem. Moral judgments require not only the ability to think but also the ability to see. For example, much of what we call the natural law, since it is prior to proof, is chiefly a matter of observation. One either sees it or one doesn't. And one can often see that certain behaviors are right or wrong without being able to prove them so. Christ didn't accuse the Pharisees of being unintelligent, he accused them of being blind.

Morality is also connected with memory which, in a sense, is the ability to see again what we have seen before. In matters of morality, observed Samuel Johnson, "we need not so much to be instructed as to be reminded." Reading the *Old Testament* one is struck with the number of admonitions to the Israelites to remember what had been done for them and what was required of them. Apparently they were prone to forget. One of the functions of what we now call "Bible stories" was to help them remember.

Which brings me back to the centrality of storytelling in character formation. There is no evidence that we are evolved to a higher moral plane than the Israelites. Very likely, in the matter of memory, ours are much shorter. In any event, it seems rather arrogant of us to suppose that we can do without stories and nourish ourselves instead simply on quandaries. The ability to see and the ability to remember develop much more readily in a climate of myth, story and poetry than in a climate of discussion and dilemma. Good stories help us to see what we ought to see about human nature but what we might not otherwise see. Flannery O'Connor said that "A story is a way to say something that can't be said any other way—you tell a story because a statement would be inadequate." She almost immediately qualifies this by adding that a good story doesn't simply say something, it shows it. In other words a good story leaves us not only with an idea but with a model or picture. At the best it gives us something akin to a motion picture in our mind—a picture of moral action which we can summon up and imitate.

Stories also refresh the memory. Without reminders we almost literally forget what moral behavior looks like. We lose our picture. We forget what good people are supposed to do and not do. This happens in very much the same way we forget places. After visiting a city we tend to come away with a mental map of it. But unless we revisit the city from time to time our mental map can become quite inaccurate with areas that are widely separated in actuality becoming jumbled and juxtaposed in our mind. The kind of drifting from moral standards which I mentioned earlier is less easy in communities which keep reminding us through stories and other means of how good men and women are supposed to act. Living in such a community it is less easy to suppose that homosexuality is in the same neighborhood as heterosexuality or that pedophilia is just around the corner from parenthood.

Although our society considers itself psychologically sophisticated, it might be a mistake to assume that we understand human psychology better than our ancestors. The use of stories in character formation shows a profound grasp of human weaknesses, needs, and motivations. Stories engage people on many psychic levels as discussions and dilemmas do not.

Why are stories so effective in forming character? If we look at the elements or mechanisms common to the stories and myths which have figured most prominently in carrying forward traditions of virtue, we find that they assume and also constitute a rough philosophy of our moral nature. Let me mention some elements that are usually present in what I shall call formative literature, and see how they work. The elements that seem most important are: 1) transport, 2) normative standards, 3) revelation, 4) transformation, 5) images, 6) identification, 7) personalization, 8) a narrative understanding of the self.

1) *Transport.* The first and perhaps most essential service which a story provides is transport. To enter a story we must leave ourselves behind, and this, it may be argued, is precisely what is needed to get

a proper moral perspective on ourselves. Good stories break through our normal self-preoccupation. They allow us to stand outside ourselves.

2) *Normative Standards*. Enduring literature is concerned with enduring standards of conduct. Either implicitly or explicitly the characters in stories are judged by these norms. Although great literature does this without being didactic, it cannot seem to do without the norms. As Dorothy Sayers points out, it is very difficult to have drama without dogma. Unless there are moral codes which are taken seriously, the violation of these codes can produce no dramatic tension.

3) *Revelation*. Characters in stories regularly fall away from these standards and often need the assist of a revelation (not necessarily religious in nature) to realize how far they've fallen. Although the norms are available for everyone to see, it sometimes requires a dramatic incident for us to see them. Consequently the revelation often comes in the form of an accident, an illness or some other misfortune. It can be a revelation of the protagonist's true character or a revelation of the real purpose or meaning of his life or of some event in his life. Aristotle, in the *Poetics,* talks about this aspect of stories in terms of two kinds of scenes: recognition, in which characters recognize each other, and reversal in which a character's fortunes are suddenly reversed. One of the great possibilities of the story is that the hearer or reader of it may also have an experience of self-recognition.

4) *Transformation*. Radical character improvement is a common motif in formative literature. That is, character change is often viewed in terms of transformation rather than in terms of development. Moral growth is not perceived as upward progress through stages but as the result of more sudden or dramatic shifts—a change of heart or a change of vision. Improvement in the moral life, then, is often described as a total reorientation following a revelation rather than as the result of a process of reasoning. In short, the transformation of the moral life is often effected by a transformation of imagination. The change in Scrooge is an exaggerated illustration of the process. This way of looking at things is not, of course, confined to literature. Moral improvement is often described by very ordinary people as the result of seeing things in a different light or seeing them for the first time. "I was blind but now I see" is more than a line from an old hymn; it is the way a great many people explain their moral growth. From this perspective it can be argued that stories, myths, etc. are a good representation of and rehearsal for the moral life since such reve-

lations and transformations are common in stories: Nathan tells King David a story of treachery and deceit and then reveals to him, "You are the man;" a mortal sickness causes Ivan Illych to see his life as he has never seen it; Augustine takes and reads and the pattern of his life is revealed to him; Saul is transformed into Paul; Lear is transformed by suffering; Louisa Musgrove is transformed after her fall from the Cobb; the spoiled boy in *Captains Courageous* is transformed into a loyal friend; Pip is transformed by his illness.

5) *Images.* Not the least important element in great stories is simply the presence of powerful images, images striking enough to be lodged in the memory and retrieved in moments of crisis or confusion: a prodigal son scrambling for his food among pigs; a father equally prodigal in his forgiveness; a rich man trying to enter the Kingdom of Heaven; a Shylock demanding his pound of flesh; a young man pining after his own image in a pool of water; another man metamorphosed into an insect; a Sydney Carton giving up his life for others. In short, the moral imagination, like any other form of imagination, is engaged by images.

6) *Identification.* Stories allow us to identify with models of virtue and courage in a way that study or discussion does not. In addition to providing a powerful motivation for good behavior, identification allows for a kind of ethical action which, although vicarious, seems crucially important for moral transformation. We can make an analogy here to athletic training. One becomes good at sports not simply through receiving instruction but also through identification and imitation. We need pictures and stories of heroes from the world of sports because training is difficult, and we need constant reminders that what we are trying to do can be done. The formation of character is also a difficult task, and it also requires heroes and models of the kind of life we hope to lead. The storytelling approach does not make the mistake of assuming that one's inner drive or inner resources are sufficient for this task.

7) *Personalization.* Stories personalize moral issues, removing them from the level of abstraction to the level of immediacy. Tolstoy's Ivan Illych, e.g., finds there is a great difference between his placid acceptance of the formula "all men are mortal" and his dreadful realization "I am going to die." Once again, a contrast may be drawn to the quandary approach which, because of its concentration on difficult cases and issues may leave students with the impression that morality is a series of academic dilemmas subject to innumerable

interpretations and therefore not a daily affair of the individual heart but a policy matter for specialists and experts.

8) *Narrative Understanding*. Stories encourage a narrative understanding of the self. An implicit assumption underlying the character ethics tradition is that life is not unlike a story and we not unlike characters in a story. That is, however difficult to elucidate, there is something like a point or purpose or plot to life. One of the great services which a story may render, then, is to help us explain what that point might be. In a similar way stories may help us to recognize a moral meaning in a personal situation that might otherwise seem chaotic or pointless. In addition they help us to locate ourselves within a tradition of people who have been tested as we find ourselves tested or who have acted as we hope to act.

The tradition of encouraging virtue through storytelling seems to assume a certain view of personal identity and moral growth: it assumes that a life, like a story, requires a theme or narrative thread; that moral growth often involves a moral conversion; that identification and imitation are crucial to the formation of both identity and character; and that character development is better served by the apprehension of objective norms rather than the expression of subjective states.

Our ancestors preferred not to separate metaphor and morality but to deliver them in the same package. They did this for good reason. It is a mistake to think that once we know the moral of a story we can forget about the story itself. This, however, has been the project of many philosophers, psychologists, and educators over the last century. In one form it manifests itself as the idea that you can have the Judaeo-Christian ethic without the Bible story. In another form it is the belief that one can pass on the principles of democracy and liberty without passing on the stories, histories and biographies that went with their development. These ideas coincide, of course, with the modern belief that moral improvement is not a matter of conversion or regeneration but simply of education. In many psychological models, for instance, improvement of any nature tends to be described either in terms of adjustment or of gradual development through stages. A lag in development will invariably be explained in terms of inadequate information or education—deficits that can be made up in the classroom or the clinic. The need for a radical transformation such as would be required to change a Mrs. Turpin (in Flannery O'Connor's story "Revelation") or a Scrooge is not admitted. Nowadays it is assumed that people like Scrooge need a change of therapists rather than a change of heart, and that people like Mrs. Turpin need to read books on human development rather than be hit over the head by them (in O'Connor's story, Mrs. Turpin's revelation comes in the form of a textbook on human development which is hurled at her head by an angry girl). In short, now that we have psychology and supposedly better-education, the story telling approach seems passe to many. For the same reason the use of strong imagery—the kind which makes for a good story—will also seem unessential. Jarring and vivid imagery may be wanted where people are perceived as complacent or willful or hardened or simply blind, but where they are perceived merely as lacking cognitive skills it will seem beside the point. Apparently we have evolved to the point where we can now take our moral education like vitamins in dehydrated pills rather than in hearty meals. "O brave new world that has such people in it."

But is the world that new and are people now so different? Our current moral education curriculums rest on the assumption that doses of sterile information and discussion are sufficient to take the place of memory, enduring standards, striking imagery, great heroes and sudden recognition. It is a large assumption on which to stake the moral lives of our children.

CHOICE IN SCHOOLING

Education as such has no aims. Only persons, parents, and teachers, etc., have aims, not an abstract idea like education. And consequently their purposes are indefinitely varied, differing with different children, changing as children grow and with the growth of experience on the part of the one who teaches.

—*John Dewey*

CHOICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

William B. Ball

Ladies and gentlemen, and fellow speakers, choice in education raises two questions: (1) are the choices legally available, and if so, (2) are all the choices which are legally available economically available? State and lower Federal court decisions raise the first question, and do not present a clear picture. I believe the Constitution does. The Supreme Court has not had before it a case which covers the full range of the critical questions pertaining to legal choices although it has provided at least three cases which deal with some of the more critical of the questions. We need to have before us this unclear picture to be able to see why the matter of legal choice is complex and what needs doing in order to make real choice legally available.

The beginning of wisdom on the Constitutional issues must be our understanding that private education is not an allowable alternative to public education, available only if private education measures up to public education prescriptions, but rather that public education is an allowable alternative to private education provided that public education measures up to the performance normal to private education in terms of producing literacy and civility. The public education establishment is not the sole educator, and the laws must come to take account of that fact of life. Nor is it the superior educator with entitlement like that of McDonald's to issue franchises to others to provide the standardized bill of fare, lavishly funded by taxpayers though it is; and given its status as a part of government, it is nevertheless but one of the laborers in the field, only one of the educators of American youth.

It can well be argued that after 1835 when the "common school" was conceived, it was indeed seen in the latter mold. Long ago, however, state legislatures made laws which not only created and supported the "common school" but rested power over all education in state educational bureaucracies. The power in any particular state might be limited or it might be plenary. Today in Texas, for example, the sole qualification which a non-state school must show is that it teaches good citizenship; while in Michigan, the laws require that a private school be state licensed and have a public school curriculum and state certified teachers or else be shut down.

The last decades have witnessed resolute challenges by private educators to the whole idea of the State as the sole or controlling educator. Amish, Mennonites, and in significant numbers with high resolve the new fundamentalist and evangelical Christian schools, have done the principled and sensible thing of explaining to courts that under the Constitution, it should not be the state which is the chooser of the child's education but the child's parents. The courts have responded variously. The Supreme Courts of Kentucky, Ohio and Vermont have essentially upheld freedom of parental choice. The U.S. District Court in Maine has negated the effort of the Maine State Board of Education to shut down fundamentalist Christian schools which could not agree that the First Amendment allows the prior restraint of licensing the religious ministry which is the Christian school; but in Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Iowa, the Courts have upheld such licensing under broadly repressive statutes which possibly have their roots, via the German emigration, in Otto von Bismarck. The test cases in these states unhappily left much to be desired. The U.S. Supreme Court fortunately declined full review in those two cases, of the cases which the fundamentalist attorneys had appealed.

What has the U.S. Supreme Court done on the issues relating to choice? Very powerfully, it has upheld the right of choice, especially of religious choice in the well known cases of *Pierce v. the Society of Sisters* and *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, but attorneys for State Boards of Education often argue that the choice must be conditioned upon restrictive conditions which they find stated in such cases as *Board of Education v. Allen* or *Wildman v. Walter*. Indeed, they quote the following from *Pierce* itself:

> "No question is raised concerning the power of the state reasonably to regulate all schools, to inspect, supervise and examine them, their teachers and pupils to require that all children of proper age attend some school; but teachers shall be of good moral character and patriotic disposition; that certain studies plainly essential to good citizenship must be taught; and that nothing be taught which is manifestly inimical to the public welfare."

Interesting observations indeed these are as they pointed to good moral character and patriotic disposition as "givens" in the America of 1925.

However, specific state controls or standards were not at issue in any of those cases. As the court noted no issue was raised in the *Pierce* case concerning those governmental powers. Further, the Court had not yet formulated its teachings on church separation, which in the case of religious schools would point to non-entanglement of the state in the affairs of such schools. The quotations are dicta. You see how important it is to stress the fact that these were dicta when you have the chance to examine specific controls or standards. You then can see what a difference there is between stating as a plausible truism that children should be taught by certified teachers and putting the typical state teacher certification process under the microscope.

In the main Federal court case to which I referred, we were able to bring out this contrast vividly. The State's witnesses had been initially rather persuasive with the court and the media by a sort of sing-song repetition that kids deserve qualified teachers. Tough certification standards produce qualified teachers. Kids deserve certified teachers. Well, not quite. Donald Erickson of the University of Southern California, the leading authority on teaching effects, torpedoed the certification claim by his insistence that the proof is in the pudding, and that no empirical evidence exists that teacher certification has produced better learning by pupils. He was followed on the stand by Russell Kirk who laid bare the realities of typical state certification processes showing them to be by and large time-wasting and ineffectual.

With the state bureaucracy imposing its notions of curriculum, for example in Michigan, such value-loaded public school courses as "global education" and "human reproduction" are sought to be laminated onto the program of private non tax-supported religious schools. It takes little in the way of cross-examination of state witnesses and state proponents of such courses to show both how baseless and unjustified such attempted lamination is.

Some months ago, I had a pleasant chat with our esteemed U.S. Secretary of Education on this very matter of state controls. Mr. Bennett at least then was of the view that some controls are needed lest fly-by-night schools proliferate to the great damage of the youngsters in them. Unhappily, our conversation was never concluded. The rest of it, at least my end of it, would have gone as follows:

> "We, the people, through our legislatures, may require that all schools public and private embrace a curriculum of the basics. The ancient core of English, mathematics, history, the form of government of one's land, geography and hygiene; that 180 days be the educational term; that the schools provide a safe environment adequate for learning; that reports of continuing testing using nationally standardized tests selected by the schools be made available to parents of students. These provisions are placed, let us say, in the compulsory attendance law. The State Boards of and Departments of Education have no regulatory power over non-public education." End of my piece of the conversation.

Mr. Bennett then might object, saying that such a system would really not assure at least a minimally good education for children.

Then my response would continue in this way:"You discount the supreme importance of the parent market" (and I am not saying that Mr. Bennett does; this is a completely hypothetical conversation).

In case after case in the courts, I have had opportunity to observe parents of private school children. These cases have not involved fancy academies, but mostly middle class folk with a strong love of their children and eminent common sense (contrary to snide comments by the bureaucracy that these people are not competent to judge what is good education and what is not). These parents, across the board, have shown a very rational grasp of what their kids are getting, and the great point that emerges is this—if they don't believe they are getting value for what they are spending in tuition, the school is going to have to shut its doors.

If Mr. Bennett were still not satisifed, then he and I would have to explore the other side of the matter. That is to say, what would be the consequences of allowing the state to enter the private school classroom in order to monitor teacher competency and to examine forced content to make sure that it comports with the state's notion of what that content should be? To raise that question is to supply the answer. The consequence would obliterate the school's and the parents' most essential Constitutional rights.

I would conclude with a reminder that we do live in a quite imperfect world. Better it is, as I see it, that the risks inherent in leaving education relatively free be accepted than to take the extreme risks which give the bureaucracy initial "minimum" standards-setting power putting "minimum" always in quotes. That premise will inevitably march us into totalitarian conclusions.

Let me now conclude as to the second problem of choice, the ecoomic. It is, of course, ridiculous to speak of a legal right to private education to one who cannot afford private education, but I have wariness over extensive public funding of private education because of the public controls which may accompany that funding. Yet that concern is met by still another: the danger to American society posed by the massive funding of state education, with the ultimate conversion of today's public education from its present status of near monopoly to tomorrow's total monopoly, possibly entitled State Ministry of Education and Attitude Formation. You have but to look at the sex education program in Pennsylvania, or for a real shocker, the proposal in the province of Alberta by an organization called Partners in Education, heavily financed, to see what I mean.

For the long-term resolution to the problem of economic choice, I would advocate relieving from the public school tax any parent who is bearing the financial cost of educating his or her children privately. This would have several good effects. It would, of course, be of great value to many parents. It would afford opportunity to more parents who are unhappy with public education to withdraw their children from the public schools. It might encourage each public school to compete for its standing in the market. Yet it would still give public education heavy tax support.

I realize that there are many ramifications of such a proposal, and it is not my purpose to present to you today the tax relief statute which I feel would be desirable. Presently, before the Congress is a measure limited in scope but vital in principle: The Equity and Choice Act (TEACH) of 1985. To defenders of the public school monopoly, who are really proponents of the State Ministry of Education and Attitude Formation, it is indeed the principle, the principle itself which is so monstrously offensive. The voucher concept, given limited but real scope in this bill, is to them the dreaded entering wedge promising a disastrous future in which public education will be destroyed and an age of ignorance will take its place.

I leave debate over this to the educators, and confine myself to but a twofold legal conclusion: TEACH is constitutional; TEACH advances basic constitutional rights. On the first point, the measure cannot be faulted even under the most liberal of existing Supreme Court decisions as violating the Establishment clause. Some of the dicta and some of the court's opinions will prove useful and quotable in briefs attacking TEACH once TEACH has become law and is challenged in court. Arguments based on these quotes will prove rebuttable; but moving from defense against establishment clause arguments to an offensive based on other constitutional grounds, I foresee success if right and reason mean anything in this world. The core of that offensive will be a demonstration of the great rationality of the measure in terms of the right of parental choice, and allied to that the importance of educational diversity to our survival as a free society.

SUCCESS DYNAMICS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF CHOICE

Mary Anne Raywid

I became interested in the choice idea for public education about 10 years ago. I did so out of a growing sense of how difficult it is to change public schools—and the notion that the choice feature might just prove the mechanism that would do it. I arrived at the hypothesis before having ever seen a school of choice, or an alternative school, as they were called in the 60s and 70s. When I began actually looking at such schools, I was fascinated. One early experience was a meeting that featured a panel of high school kids who tried valiantly to make the audience understand how terrific their schools were! Sounds like one of those conversations that never took place doesn't it?—A real credulity test. But I have since seen it repeated on a number of occasions, with adolescents setting aside their cool to try to convince you how much their school means to them. Anybody who has seen adolescents close up, or tried to teach them under the standard conditions of the comprehensive high school, will know right away how extraordinary this is. When I first encountered it, I used to think it "a bit of magic." I have now spent a decade trying to figure it out with more precision and replicability than that explanation yields. I want to share here my thoughts on what those dynamics seem to be.

I begin, however, with a couple of caveats. First is that of course not all schools of choice are successful. The choice feature appears of considerable value in and of itself and it is also quite typically a good catalyst in introducing some other conditions and arrangements of value. But if for any reason these conditions and arrangements are blocked, then a school of choice can prove less than successful. To put this a bit differently, the evidence seems clear enough at this point to suggest some of the other conditions that need to be present in order for a school of choice to really soar. They still need more extensive verification of the direct sort than is now available; but from findings in a lot of related areas, it is possible to map out the dynamics with considerable plausibility.

It ought to be added that researchers would surely find my 'success dynamics' a conflating and confounding of independent and intervening variables—and perhaps there are even some instances of double-listing for a single factor, in effect covering the same thing from several perspectives. These are serious confusions, of course, in the *doing* of research; they can be useful, however, in trying to make research findings come alive for the rest of us.

So with these warnings about the uses to which such a list can be put, let us move to what appear to be the most important success secrets of schools of choice. In effect, a number of positive cycles are launched which sometimes overlap and buttress *other* positive cycles simultaneously under way. Those most knowledgeable about the Excellence Movement will recognize that my list of success dynamics *supplements* rather than duplicates its curricular focus. This is partly to underscrore some overlooked essentials—and partly because I believe school effectiveness to hinge far more on the structural characteristics of schools than is generally recognized.

We need to start with the choice feature itself, of course. Choice is a value *per se* in our society: to extend choice is to open new options—to broaden freedom and possibility. And that is a benefit in and of itself. It is a particular benefit to those who have been unhappy with the pre-choice situation, but it is a boon even to those who have not. Choice means instant empowerment for those who receive it, and it significantly alters the relation of chooser and chosen. It institutes a mutuality and lends a dignity to the chooser that is missing from a relationship in which one of the parties is a captive. (If you think I exaggerate the dignity deprivation in being a member of a captive relationship, recall the now all too familiar situation of the State Motor Vehicle Bureau—with long lines of "customers" seeking audiences with bored and often arrogant clerks.) The sheer existence of more than one game in town immediately transforms the relationship of every student and family to the school of enrollment. That bureaucratic indifference undergoes miraculous metamorphosis. One of the reasons for this is that the role of students and their families is altered significantly by choice. They become, as one analyst expressed it, *agents* or *origins* instead of mere *pawns* in all that is to follow.[1] Thus, a first set of success dynamics appearing in schools of choice has to do with transforming roles and relationships within the school.

A second set produces significantly improved teaching. The baseline conditions of the classroom are changed from the outset. Instead of 30 disparate souls assembled by a computer, shared choices yield a group that is similar in some educationally significant way. Furthermore, they are typically alike in some way that is far more educationally useful than similar ability levels in directing their instruction.

They share a particular set of interests or goals or approaches to learning. This permits a degree of coherence as to mission and focus that is elusive in other classrooms.

In consequence, teachers in schools of choice start out with better odds—with higher chances of success from the outset. This means greater teacher efficacy which in turn yields enhanced student achievement. And the higher success rate leads in turn to a heightened sense of professionalism on the part of teachers. They are able, that is, to a far greater extent, to *experience* themselves as engaged in professional practice than are teachers who work day after day under conditions that predictably can yield them few successes. We sometimes underrate the impact of such a situation on teacher morale and performance—although the pride with which teachers relate success stories provides a strong clue. Their experience in schools of choice points up what a difference teacher success can make: staff morale and satisfaction are higher and this conduces to greater commitment and effort, which in turn yield further increases in efficacy. Thus, the classroom conditions initially established by the choice feature can set an enviable circle in motion, whereby increased efficacy leads to higher morale which yields greater effort which in turn improves efficacy still further. Lest it sound a bit Pollyanna-ish—or even Candide-like—it doesn't always happen this way. And even where it does, such gratifying circles of improvement undoubtedly are not without limit. But as one looks, over a period of time, at a successful school of choice, such dynamics as these appear evident.

Still a third sort of cycle introduced by the choice arrangement is the breaking down of tight bureaucratic controls in schools. Study after study lends increasing confirmation to the conclusion that such control is inimical to the effective conduct of education.[2] Accordingly, a number of recent reports urge the return of more governance authority to the school level, and of pedagogical authority to the classroom level.[3] The choice arrangement conduces to just this sort of reversal, producing centrifugal forces within the system.

For a variety of reasons, school control has gravitated toward centralization and over the years has become increasingly remote from the classrooms it governs. There is considerable criticism of the resulting pattern, and conviction that things should be otherwise; but such arrangements are highly resistant to change.[4] The choice feature functions as an excellent mechanism for redressing the balance. It works this way: centralized control both presupposes and produces uniformity. It makes no sense to undertake a remote control arrangement of a collection of enterprises that differ extensively from one another. Their goals, functions, structures, processes, require differential regulation and internal coordination. Only where it is assumed that the units to be controlled are essentially *similar* does a high degree of centralization make sense. Otherwise, another control pattern is likely to prove more efficient and effective.

Highly centralized control arrangements not only *presuppose* sameness among the units governed, but they also bring constant pressure toward even further uniformity. This occurs as a consequence of centrally-promulgated regulations standardizing practices and procedures, and thus narrowing the range these would otherwise assume.

The introduction of the choice feature into a school system serves as a considerable impetus to modifying its control patterns. For while centralization presumes and produces standardization, the choice arrangement represents the reverse. It both assumes and yields uniqueness and differentiation: it makes no sense to offer choice among several units unless it is supposed that those units differ from one another in ways that matter. This acknowledgement relaxes the pressures toward school-to-school uniformity, and that permits even further differences to develop. Meanwhile, the particular constituencies attracted to each school can become more prominent a factor in shaping the school—and this functions also to increase school-to-school difference and diversity.

Thus, schools of choice conduce to a redistribution of control within public school systems, and, in effect, to a restoration of the conditions of 'The Little Red School House.' That is, more authority reverts to the school level, and typically an increased share of that authority goes to the classroom teacher. The result is that the choice arrangement tends to recreate what Assistant Education Secretary Finn calls 'strategic independence.' Such independence, he has argued persuasively, is important if our effort to improve schools is not just going to cripple them instead.[5].

Some worry that the relaxation of regulatory control over teachers may negatively affect school quality. Another set of dynamics to which choice gives rise makes this unlikely. What is at stake is not a matter of control versus no controls: control and coordination are essential in any large enterprise, and particularly so in one where the functions of one worker must be essentially determined by the functions of others. But the *type* of control, and the way it is exercised, are of utmost importance. Bureaucratic organizations promulgate rules and regulations to achieve the necessary control and coordination.

Through a careful combination of demands and constraints they seek to direct the behavior of workers. But when there is extensive fundamental agreement among workers, detailed behavioral control is superfluous. The common values guiding the decisions of each can be trusted to provide enough 'glue' to coordinate the activities of all.[6]

Obviously, this kind of coordination is much easier for teachers to live with than the sort experienced as requirements and prohibitions, and that may make a difference in the relative effectiveness of schools employing the two control strategies. Analysts seeking to explain the superior effects of private schools on student achievement have suggested that the difference in control patterns may be a central part of the answer.[7] It seems to produce more satisfied teachers, and it also leaves them freer to adapt instruction to particular classes and individuals. The leeway to do so—less available in detailed control arrangements—has repeatedly been found important to successful teaching.[8]

Yet another cluster of dynamics which choice sets in motion in public schools are those researchers have associated with corporate excellence. The superiority of outstanding corporations, said Peters and Waterman, lies in their ability to elicit extraordinary performance from ordinary people.[9] And how does this occur? Once more, in schools of choice it appears that the choice feature sets other things in motion which do the trick. For example, the outstanding corporations encourage colleagueship. In schools of choice, this develops out of necessity; a magnet school must develop its own curriculum because that has not already been done for them; new learning activities must be designed; relationship patterns must be set up between staff and students, staff and parents, and staff and community. These are activities that demand collaboration, especially given the commitment to school uniqueness and diversity that inheres in the very idea of choice. The need to create and invent makes it necessary that teachers work together to generate and maintain new answers to perennial educational questions. This means not only that teachers interact more among themsleves in schools of choice, but that they interact a great deal more over professional matters. There are questions and problems which can only be solved jointly. Such a situation serves as an antidote to the isolated condition in which most teachers must work, substituting the sorts of collaborative conditions which Peters and Waterman (among others) have found in excellent corporations.

The resulting sense of joint endeavor tends to heighten teacher engagement in and commitment to the enterprise—and this, too, is a feature marking the workers in oustanding corporations. Moreover, the challenges which have been met together involve matters that the evolving education 'industry' has largely closed off to teachers in most schools. The divisions of labor that have grown up in education over the years have made specializations of counseling students, testing them, or designing curriculum—to the extent that most teachers have little to do directly with such matters. Youngsters needing counseling or other 'special services' are expected to be referred by teachers—and teachers are typically cast in the role of consumers of the products of test and curriculum designers, not the creators of such products. Such divisions of labor have been celebrated on the one hand as yielding highly expert products and services. But they have been criticized on the other as having the effect of de-skilling teachers, so that a great deal of the knowledge and the activities once defining the teacher's role have become largely tangential to it.

The possible negative consequences of such a situation have been variously discussed as the de-skilling of a vocation, the under-utilization of professionals, and the alienation of people within an enterprise which strictly defines a narrow role and function for them. Such dangers have been addressed by those urging the socio-technical design of work: i.e., the establishing of roles and divisions of labor that make sense in terms of worker functioning, as well as in terms of the separability of product parts.[10] Hence, the famous Volvo reorganization replacing the traditional assembly line mode of production with multiple groups that produced automobiles. Such an arrangement has been argued as the way to obtain maximal worker skill utilization, satisfaction, and productivity. It may be that schools of choice have serendipitously discovered the analogous reorganization plan for the educational enterprise.

Quite a different sort of feature releases yet another set of assets for schools of choice: most such schools appear committed to a personalizing of education in contrast to more prevalent patterns. High schools are typically so large, and the division of tasks within them so allotted, that many youngsters can go through school in virtual anonymity. Increasing evidence suggests, however, that those who do so may benefit only minimally from school and remain substantially untouched by its mission.[11] Thus, the personalizing of what have sometimes been extensively impersonal institutions represents an important step in rendering them more attractive to and effective with youngsters. A determination to make sure that every youngster is known fairly well to one or more of the adults in the school leads to a variety of organizational provisions—e.g., to advisor or mentor systems, to integrated curricula keeping students with a single teacher for extended periods, to reduced student loads for staff. Such arrangements, and the benefits they yield, seem to make a major difference in adolescents' attitudes toward school and teachers. Even youngsters who have previously experienced teachers as indifferent and uncaring people typically come to see them quite otherwise—and to behave differently in an environment they perceive as supportive. This in turn not only contributes to the moral order of the school; it also enables schools to succeed at transmitting values central to their mission—e.g., values related to citizenship and character.

The personalizing of education simultaneously yields another set of effects in supplement to changed attitudes. When teachers know students sufficiently well to be acquainted with their achievement levels and capacities and learning styles, it becomes possible to tailor instruction so as to provide the right combination of challenge and support. This leads in turn to more successful teaching and student achievement. And the success itself functions as a stimulus to further effort and great subsequent accomplishment.

One final set of dynamics introduced by the choice feature functions to make schools self-renewing systems. The importance of this contribution is hard to over-estimate. The reason is that without self-renewal capacities, it is difficult for any organization to remain relevant and for its workers to sustain high levels of mission commitment. This is particularly true of large-scale, bureaucratically organized, non-profit institutions where profits and losses don't supply immediate feedback and incentives to change. In such organizations, the absence of self-renewal capacities lets the solutions to yesterday's problems remain so firmly entrenched as to interfere with perceiving and meeting today's. In schools of choice, however, the responsiveness orientation, including the personalization just discussed, conduces to continuing preoccupation with how well the school is serving its current population. Enrollment shifts yield immediate feedback on the school's image and the size of the group interested in the program it offers. Enrollment drops telegraph problems, or shifts in community interests, and they recommend the diagnosis and resolution of programs, and the modification of a program no longer being sought. And at the same time that the general commitment to responsiveness is yielding more feedback on what needs fixing, the relatively small size and ensuing flexibility of schools of choice is permitting the necessary changes to take place—and the colleagueship earlier identified as being marshalled to support and implement the changes. Thus, the choice feature serves as the catalyst not just to the creation of desirable new programs, but to their continual regeneration.

These, then, constitute six distinguishable sets of dynamics which the provision of choice in public schools seems to place in motion. They are not all present in every school of choice, and not all have been fully developed in every such school to enable it to flourish. But when one begins, as I have done here, to explore what it is that accounts for the outstanding success achieved by many public schools of choice, these are the dynamics which appear to be operating.

NOTES

[1] Richard de Charms, "Pawn or Origin? Enhancing Motivation in Disaffected Youth," *Educational Leadership*, March 1977, pp. 444-448.

[2] See, e.g., Linda Darling-Hammond and Arthur E. Wise, "Beyond Standardization: State Standards and School Improvement," *Elementary School Journal*, January 1985, pp. 315-336.

[3] See, e.g., *Investing in our Children*, New York: Committee for Economic Development, 1985; and *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, Hyattsville, MD: Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986.

[4] See Mary Anne Raywid, "Restoring School Efficacy by Giving Parents a Choice," *Educational Leadership*, November 1980, pp. 134-137.

[5] Chester E. Finn, Jr., "Toward Strategic Independence: Nine Commandments for Enhancing School Effectiveness," *Phi Delta Kappan*, April 1984, pp. 518-524.

[6] See Laura Hersh Salganik and Nancy Karweit, "Voluntarism and Governance in Education," *Sociology of Education*, April-July 1982, pp. 152-161.

[7] John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe, *Politics, Markets, and the Organization of Schools*, Project Report No. 85-A15, Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance, Stanford University, November 1985.

[8] Linda Darling-Hammond, *Beyond the Commission Reports: The Coming Crisis in Teaching*. Santa Monica: Rand, July 1984.

[9] Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*. New York: Harper and Row, 1982.

[10] See, e.g., Arthur Wirth, *Productive Work - In Industry and Schools: Becoming Persons Again*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983.

[11] See, e.g., Arthur G. Powell, et al., *The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985; and Michael Sedlak et al., "High School Reform and the 'Bargain' to Learn," *Education and Urban Society*, February 1985.

FAMILY CHOICE IN EDUCATION

Thomas Ascik

I am here as an expert in education—I'm a father.

I want to talk about ***equality*** and the ***common good.***

One of the education establishment's responses to the Reagan Administration's Chapter 1 voucher bill has been to warn that parents may ***not be capable*** of choosing the schools for their children. Thus, Paul Devlin of the AFT-affiliate Massachusetts Federation of Teachers has stated that the bill was "asking parents to make a judgment on what is best in remediation while they don't have the basis for making that judgment."

In the completely-biased committee print, "Problems with the Administration's Voucher Proposal for Chapter 1: The Equity and Choice Act," released by a subcommittee of the House Education and Labor Committee, it is claimed that "Parents often choose schools for reasons other than the instruction program." Further, it is said that "the bill offers no protection for parents from 'fly by night' schools that spring up to take advantage of Federal dollars."

Columnist Edwin M. Yoder, Jr. was the most explicit: "A far more astounding premise of the voucher plan," he said, "is that poor and puzzled parents would be handy at judging the relative benefits of 'competing' schools." In addition, Yoder claimed that "the picture of struggling parents (often in single-parent households) surveying the educational marketplace and rerouting their underachieving children is bizarre."

You see, their point is that it is a ***necessity*** for educational experts to tell poor or disadvantaged parents how to raise their children—selecting schools being only one of many child-raising decisions that parents make. Now, four anecdotes about ***experts*** and ***citizens.***

Recently, my wife and I thought that our two-year-old daughter had an orthopedic problem. We thought that she might be "toeing-in." We took her to an orthopedist, and it turned out that there was no problem. But, in discussing this matter with my wife, she mentioned that one of her brothers had had this problem and that her parents had taken him to ***three different*** orthopedists and had received ***three different*** diagnoses.

Now, who made the orthopedic decision in that case? Who chose? The parents. The parents, completely ***inexpert*** in orthopedics, weighed three different *expert* diagnoses—*different* diagnoses by three *similarly-educated* doctors—and then decided whose expertise they would adopt. This is normal. It is done everyday. I don't think many people would challenge the way these kinds of decisions are made.

I recently witnessed a conversation between two fathers about the education of their children. This was a private, non-political conversation. The only thing on their minds was the welfare of their children. This was a conversation between two men who presumably are examples of the educational *ideal:* one has a law degree and one has a doctorate in engineering. What was striking to me is that neither had any inclination at all to attribute any expertise whatsoever to the educational system. The conversation was about getting around the system, limiting the damage of the system, and finding anomalous opportunities in the system for the kind of education that they *themselves* thought was the best for their children.

A friend of mine is the father of six children, two pre-schoolers and four in school. For the first three who went to school, he fought with schools for what he wanted in the education of his children. He was worn out by the fourth. And, in addition, he noticed something interesting about the intellectual development of the fourth, a daughter. What he noticed made him even more cynical about schools. He noticed that his fourth daughter was learning more from her three older siblings than from school. His children have all attended Catholic schools.

In the May 6, 1986, edition of *Woman's Day,* you will find an article entitled "False Accusation of Child Abuse—Could It Happen To You?" In that article is told the story of a married couple whose four-year-old daughter was forcibly removed from their home because the authorities accused the father of sexual molestation. Without going into the horrible details, the whole case turned around *different diagnoses.* The doctor, the expert, whose diagnosis supported the charge of child abuse was *wrong.*

So much for experts. In a *democracy,* citizen control of experts is a necessity. The alternative is to make expertise a qualification for citizenship.

In the area of government programs, public education is an anomaly. Most government programs—for example: student loans, welfare, Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare—subsidize the individual recipients *directly* rather than the institutions that supply the recipients with services. In other words, choice is *normal* in America.

Health and education are the country's two biggest industries—they dwarf the defense industry, for instance. Annually, governments invest as much in health as in education. Nutrition is a big part of health. Using the same rationale used to justify the status quo in public education, we may wonder why the government should not fund grocery stores directly rather than deliver food stamps to individuals.

The health of the populace is—as the venereal disease and AIDS epidemics make clear—a major public interest. Why should it be left to individuals to decide what is in the public interest? In addition, the poor and disadvantaged may not know how to make health-promoting decisions.

Well, no one talks like this with respect to health policy. But they do with respect to education policy. Why? What's wrong with the all-American concepts of freedom of choice and self-determination? Why has the education establishment reacted to the Chapter I voucher bill with what David Kelley, writing in *Barron's*, has aptly described as "self-righteous and obtuse belligerence?"

I think it is because public education—and more precisely, the public interest in education—is burdened with its own peculiar and unique set of debilitating ideas, false objectives, failed but uncorrectable programs, and tortured histories.

I propose that the American public interest in education has almost *never* had a good sense of the *common good*, the good common to all, everyone *equal*. I think that if we attempt to think about the common good, we will conclude that the family, whatever its strengths or weaknesses, is that which *all* Americans have in *common*. A religion is not what all Americans have in common. A political philosophy is not what all Americans have in common. An educational philosophy is not what all Americans have in common.

If we attempt to think about the common good and education, we will conclude that:

> Child-rearing is the whole and schooling is only the part. Parents have authority over the whole and, therefore, they should have the ultimate authority over the part.
>
> The common good (of which education is a part) is *dependent upon* the welfare of families. The family substantially produces the welfare of the state. The state cannot produce the welfare of the family, however. The family produces its own welfare with its own means, that is, it has means *unique* to itself. The state will only realize *its* own welfare by understanding, respecting, and *deferring* to this unique welfare production by and of the family.
>
> The family exists prior to the state, therefore, it has rights prior to the state.

> In education, the level of institutions, the level of public v. private schools, is *secondary* because education is nearly impossible without an appropriate family context. In education, the family is primary in *fact* and primary in *right*.
>
> Children are not begotten for political/social reasons. It is not up to the state to declare this *ex post facto*. Families do not want the state for *its* purposes. They want it for their purposes.

There are at least nine reasons why the public interest in education flows from institutions to individuals/families rather than from individuals/families to institutions. That is, there are at least nine reasons why the public interest in education today is *abnormal*.

First of all, there are several events in history, the effects of which remain not just powerful—but *definitive*.

Number one of these may be the fact that the public interest in education *was* once regarded as a task of *truly being of assistance to families*, that is, it once was *normal*. The best example of this is the incorporation of the Free School Society in New York in 1805. The Free School Society proposed to establish a "free school in the city of New York for the education of persons in indigent circumstances who do not belong to or are not provided for by any religious society." *The religious schools of the time were themselves providing free education to the poor.* The Free School Society did not intend to *replace* those efforts but only to provide education to the unchurched or to those who were not being reached by the church schools.

At the time, the state of New York was giving aid to church schools, most of which were Protestant but also, after a struggle, Catholic schools as well. But in 1826, the Free School Society changed its name to the *Public School Society*, obtained a monopoly over the common school funds, and became the enforcer of the new movement to secularize education. So, it can be seen that the movement to separate religion from education caused a turning around of how government acted in the field of education—from help to domination.

The next historical event is that Horace Mann was openly against parents. A few samples of his pronouncements:

> Here, then, lies the fatal error:—parents rest contented with the feeling of love; they do not devote themselves to the acquisition of that knowledge which is necessary to guide it . . . Love of children does not know how to command, in order to insure the habit of prompt and willing obedience.
>
> All this invaluable, indispensable knowledge comes from reading, from study, from observation, from reflection, from forethought;—it never comes, it never can come, from the blind instinct or feeling of parental love. Hence, as we all know, those parents do not train up their children best who love them most.
>
> Nor are abandoned lives confined to families alone, where the treatment of chil-

> dren, by their parents, is characterized by gross ignorance and heathenism . . . But how often do we see children issuing from the abodes of rational and pious parents, where a burning love, a hallowed zeal, a life-consuming toil, have been expended upon them,—of parents who have bedewed the nightly pillow with tears, and, morning and evening, have wrestled with the angel of mercy to bring down blessings upon their heads,—how often do we see these children bursting madly forth, and rushing straight onward to some precipice of destruction?
>
> The children, whom parents have brought into this world, are carried forward by the ceaseless flow of time, and the irresistible course of nature, and will soon be men . . . In a brief space, these children will have the range of the whole community, and will go forth to pollute or to purify, to be bane or blessing to those who are to live with them, and to come after them. On the day when their minority ceases, their parents will deliver them over, as it were, into the hands of society, without any regard to soundness or unsoundness in their condition. Forthwith, that society has to assume the entire responsibility of their conduct for life;—for society, in its collective capacity, is a real, not a nominal sponsor and godfather for all its children.

The next historical event is that anti-Catholicism was established as a main purpose of public education. In other words, the power of government was needed to keep a certain group of families down. The same was true, obviously, for blacks, These were just two of the historical events that set the precedent for governmental use of schools to coerce, command, and exclude—rather than assist—citizens.

This same precedent was further reinforced by the change from the non-denominational Protestantism of the nineteenth century to the scientific secularism of the twentieth century. John Dewey, who, along with Mann, is one of the two chief figures in the history of American education, was, of course, the chief prophet of this new educational religion. In his *Credo*. Dewey said:

> Faith in its new sense signifies that experience itself is the sole ultimate authority. Religions have been saturated with the supernatural—and the supernatural signifies precisely that which lies beyond experience.

Again, the point here is that the public schools were not to accept the citizens as they were. Dewey was, and continues to be, a governmentally-endorsed threat to religious citizens. The public schools were to change citizens, to encourage some thoughts and sentiments and discourage others.

The fifth reason is the fabrication by the Supreme Court of the "wall of separation" between church and state. [*Everson v. Board of Education,* 330 U.S. 1, (1947)]. This *is* a fabrication. Separation was not the issue that the First Amendment was designed to address. *Disestablishment* was the issue. And, as Richard Baer has pointed out, separation is an impossible standard to live by—and to govern by. Neither institutions nor people are neatly divisible (separated) into the secular and the sacred, the public and the private. There are no Great Walls in the human soul. This is an impossible public policy. It is a public policy that prevails in no other Western democracy, all of whom confronted the same question that the Supreme Court confronted in the *Everson* case.

It has caused ruthlessly secularized public institutions. In other words, the great wall of separation inevitably became the great wall of exclusion. The spiritual and moral sentiments of religious people have been completely excluded from our public institutions. In 1986, the situation became so bad that two studies of the treatment of religion in public-school textbooks reported:

> ''One might conclude from reading this text that religion and religious freedom are of no consequence in most of America's history.'' Study by Dr. Charles Haynes for the Research Foundation of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.
>
> ''Not one of the 40 books in this study had one word of text that referred to any religious activity representative of contemporary life.'' Study by Paul Vitz, professor of psychology, New York University.

And this returns us again to a consistent theme of public education: exclusion, that is, public schools *against* certain segments of the public.

Sixth, the acceptance by Protestant bodies—all of whom, except for Missouri Synod Lutherans, had mostly abandoned their own church schools by the end of the nineteenth century—of the dichotomy between secular education and Sunday school greatly narrowed the constituency for family self-determination in education. In other words, the notion of the family as the initiator of education was willingly scrapped by families themselves.

Seventh, there are some pieties that control public discourse about education. Since the introduction of the Chapter 1 voucher bill, we have heard much about the threat that educational choice poses to the welfare of ''our public school system.'' More specifically, we have heard that the very fabric of our society is at stake, for the public school system is ''the glue that holds this country together.'' This totally false assertion is never challenged, but let it not go unchallenged today. I do not know what the glue is that holds this country together. I suspect that it is the human instinct for liberty. But it is not the public schools. The assertion that public education holds this country together implies three unacceptable consequences, I think. The first is, clearly, that if you didn't go to public schools, then you are somehow a deficient American. This is hardly a pleasant thing for the millions of Americans who graduated from private schools to hear. Second, it strongly implies that private schools should not exist ("only public schools have the glue"). In other words, it rejects the holding of the Supreme Court in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (1925). Third, it implies that the currently-pitiful job that public schools are doing is either the desired outcome of public education ("the glue is sticking") or else is so far off from the desired outcome ("the glue is not sticking") as to require the complete abandonment of public schools immediately.

Eight, there is something else that must be said in response to righteous indignation about the impiety of proposing the threat of choice to this ancient institution, "our public schools that have served us so well," or what Mary Futrell of the NEA has called "the long-standing practice of universal, free public education in the United States." What is routinely ***not*** said is that ***today's*** status quo in public education is not long-standing at all. Public schools were not always like the way they are now. What is also not said is that local control of education cannot be said to exist in any serious way anymore. A few illustrations:

> At the time of the American revolution, the ***kingdom*** of Prussia was the only country in the world where education was the responsibility of the national government. Of course, everyone here knows that Horace Mann's observing of the Prussian educational system was a major event in the development of his educational thought.
>
> Andrew Jackson, our seventh president, was the first president to graduate from public schools.
>
> In 1791, the year of the ratification of the First Amendment, nine states had established religions. Disestablishment did not occur in Massachusetts until 1833.
>
> The first compulsory attendance law was passed in Massachusetts in 1852—seventy-six years after the Declaration of Independence. It applied only to children ages 8-14.
>
> In 1874, the Michigan Supreme Court ruled in the famous *Kalamazoo* case that the public could be taxed for support of high schools. In other words, nearly 100 years after the Declaration of Independence, this question was still open.
>
> In 1900, there were 3,000 agencies nationwide—public ***and*** private—that licensed teachers. In 1900, only 72 percent of the population aged 5-17 was enrolled in public schools. Today, it is 88 percent. In 1900, the average school term was 144 days. Today, it is 180 days.
>
> In 1920, there were still an estimated 189,227 one-room school houses in the United States. In that year, there were great variations in the length of the school term: from 189 days in New Jersey to 110 days in South Carolina to seventy-seven days in parts of Arkansas. In 1920, there were over 120,000 school districts in this country. Today, there are less than 15,000.

> The First Amendment's Establishment Clause was not given its first construction by the Supreme Court until the *Everson* case of 1948—157 years after the ratification of the First Amendment.
>
> Collective bargaining in education did not begin until the early 1960's.
>
> The Supreme Court rulings in education have made it more important than all school boards and have made it, in fact, The National School Board. The first education ruling of consequence by the Supreme Court was only in 1925.

So, it can be seen that public education in the United States was formerly highly diverse and highly decentralized. Its present intellectually-homogenized, secular, professionalized, aloof, and bureaucratic character is new. The entire "system" was formerly more controllable by the public. And, in fact, there was more public support for this sytem when it was less centralized and, therefore, less threatening. In fact, today, 45 percent of public-school parents would send their children to private schools if they could afford it (1984 Gallup Poll.) It took 150 years for the public-school system to reach its present near-totalitarian state. Thus, to criticize the system now is not necessarily to criticize its entire history.

Ninth, we must all concede that education has been the victim of numerous wrong-headed—and wildly unpopular—policies over the past twenty-five years. You need go no farther for an example than the policy of busing for purposes of racial engineering. This policy may be coming to an end now, but here is what two federal courts recently had to say about its effects on parental involvement in the schools:

In the Norfolk busing case, a Federal appeals court ruled:

> "Likewise, the [trial] court found as a fact and credited the Board's second reason for adoption of the proposed plan, that of seeking an increase in the level of parental involvement. All the evidence at trial, both from plaintiffs and the Board, indicated that parental involvement at the elementary level was essential to the well-being of the school system. Because of busing, parental involvement, through the vehicle of the PTA, had been virtually destroyed . . . The proposed plan offered by the board represented a reasonable proposal to try to solve the dilemma of declining parental involvement."
>
> *Riddick v. School Board of the City of Norfolk,* U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, No. 84-1815, February, 1986. Currently on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In the 1985 Oklahoma City busing case, a Federal district court ruled:

> "In the early 1970's, there were approximately 94 parent-teacher associations within the school district with a total membership in excess of 25,000 people. Presently, there are only 14 parent-teacher associations and the membership is less than 5,000. Parental involvement is an essential ingredient to quality education.

The Board of Education previously took steps in an effort to increase parental involvement. An attempt was made to implement a district-wide parents' council. School board meetings were moved out into the community. Buses were sent to certain schools to pick up parents for meetings. However, these efforts failed. The court finds that the degree of parental involvement in the schools is a legitimate concern of the Board of Education and that the School Board's proposed plan will have the effect of increasing parental involvement at the elementary level."

Dowell. Board of Education of Oklahoma City Public Schools, 606 F.Supp. 1548 (1985), W.D. Oklahoma. Currently on appeal to the U.S. Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals.

CHAPTER ONE VOUCHERS: THE ILLUSION OF CHOICE

Michael Casserly

I am not an academician, and my approach to the topic of vouchers is not going to be academic. I am a lobbyist. I am, I suspect, the opponent of many of you on the so-called TEACH bill. I am therefore very glad that this podium is large so that you are not going to be able to get a real clear shot at me. I am pleased to be here today; I assume I was invited either for comic relief or to supply some degree of token opposition; and Checker (Assistant Secretary Chester Finn), I thought this administration didn't believe in quotas, but I will have to reassess that.

You have heard a great deal, I suspect, at this conference and over the last several months about the Department of Education initiative in the area of content, character and choice, which is what this workshop is about. It is a rather catchy, appealing theme that befits this administration's capacity for slogans and imagery and typifies its bumper sticker approach to public policy. In fact this initiative offers very little of the three things that it promises. I'd prefer instead to substitute my own three C's. First, there are the *children,* the target of our educational efforts whom I believe that both proponents and opponents of the voucher legislation often forget. The second C would be for *chance,* or for commitment to opportunity and access to quality education, a chance for every one of those children. And the third C which I know Checker would probably disagree on, the third C would be for *cash,* for fiscal support of elementary and secondary education particularly at the Federal level, rather than the financial cutbacks that we have suffered over the last five to six years.

The topic of my brief talk is Chapter One vouchers, the illusion of choice. I will focus my remarks on the so-called TEACH bill because it is the centerpiece, the so-called cornerstone, of the Department of Education's choice plan. First of all I would like to set the record straight on a number of objections that we as opponents of the legislation have, and what objections we do not have. Over the course of this debate we have been termed anti-choice, anti-family, anti-religion, anti-Catholic (which is one I particularly and personally resent), and socialist. I wear this pin stripe suit in particular to ward off the latter charge.

First of all, do we think that the TEACH bill would destroy public education? No. I don't believe so. Public education is largely the responsibility and concern of the local and state governments. While the TEACH bill would not do the Chapter One program any good, in fact I don't believe it would destroy public education. Do we think public education couldn't compete with private education? No, not at all. In fact, public school people, particularly in the cities, I believe, are some of the most creative and competitive educational people in the country. I do believe they can compete. But let me say in terms of the issue of competition, giving people a voucher to go to a private school in order to improve public schools, or in order to improve the competitive standing of public schools, would be a little like giving people a $600 voucher (or whatever the amount of the voucher is) to buy a Japanese car in order to improve the competitive edge of General Motors. It simply doesn't make any sense.

Do we think parents are not capable of making choices? Absolutely not. As a parent myself, I believe that nearly all, if not all, parents have the welfare of their children at heart.

Do we think that the Chapter One voucher program would cream the best kids out of public schools? No, I don't believe that. In fact that is a major misreading of the intent of the Chapter One program, which targets on the most needy of our children.

Are we against giving poor parents the same choice that rich parents have about the education of their children? Of course not. That's nonsense.

Are we against choice in education? Absolutely not. In fact, the public schools in this country use a whole host of educational choice options right now including magnet schools, open enrollment, modular curriculum and interdistrict transfers.

Are we for monopolizing education? I heard a great deal about monopolies in education today. Of course not, and over the last 15 years it appears rather clear that the public school community and the private school community have reached a certain balance in terms of each's share of the nation's children. Although I must say in terms of monopolies, if you liked what divestiture did for the phone monopoly, you are going to love what vouchers do to public education. We broke up AT&T to offer people choice in the name of competition, and I will be darned if we can't get a dial tone now about half the time.

What then is wrong with this bill? Its main problem is that it has nothing to do with choice. This bill does not offer choice, it offers the illusion of choice. More to the point, this bill is a sham, a ruse on the public, an example of educational quackery. This is a bill that would be pulled from the private marketplace if it were subjected to any of the private sector standards that the administration so often talks about.

Let me explain my point by giving you an example. Let's take a hypothetical second grader, Jonathan, who lives in a Chapter One zone in a school district that is heavily poor, who at the end of his second-grade year is tested and is found to be in the 35th percentile on his reading achievement. His mother decides, however, that on the basis of the child's first two years in school, she doesn't like the public schools, the teachers, and in fact, she has heard that she can collect $600, $900 or $1,000 to move to another school if she would like to.

Let's look for a second at the choices she has. First of all let me point out we are dealing here with a Chapter One voucher bill, and by definition, already over half of the children who will be eligible for this program won't receive a voucher simply because the administration has not funded the program at adequate levels. Now, let's go back to Jonathan and his mother in terms of Jonathan's and his mother's choices. First of all, his mother is going to be limited in her choices by the various admissions policies of the schools in the jurisdiction where she lives. I don't have to break this to you; not everybody allows in all children. Many schools have selective admissions standards and procedures.

Their choices have now been limited in one way, actually in two ways, since not all children are going to have the money from this bill to receive a voucher in the first place. The third limitation, as I look out on all the private schools that might be eligible or might be located in my particular district, is that Jonathan and his mother are going to be constrained by whether Jonathan can get to the school unless the school offers the child the transportation services to get him there.

Finally, choices will be limited by the size of the voucher, although I suspect that in many cases particularly in the inner cities and with parochial schools and at the elementary school level, the size of the voucher in most cities will cover most of the payment if not all of the payment in those kinds of school systems. Already, however, choices have been constrained.

Let's say Jonathan's mother irons out all of these problems and takes a second job and pays for the difference between the voucher and the tuition at a private school. Jonathan goes to a private school for his third grade year, has a great third grade year, and the private school does exactly what the administration contends it would do, that is, it would do a better job than the public school at educating little Jonathan. His scores go up from the 35th percentile to the 45th percentile, and on retesting he is now ineligible for Chapter One, and therefore is now ineligible for the voucher.

Now my choice as Jonathan's parent is to choose between staying at the private school for Jonathan's fourth grade year and cough up the tuition which I couldn't afford without the voucher, or going back to the public school from whence Jonathan came. That is exactly the choice that I had Jonathan's second grade year. This is no choice, this is an illusion of choice, and anyone who disagrees with that particular dynamic hasn't the foggiest idea of how to read Federal law. This is how Chapter One works, and this is how this legislation was written.

To justify this proposal, the Department of Education points to other so-called choice or voucher proposals that exist in Vermont, in New York City, in Minneapolis; they point to Pell Grants; they point to food stamps; they point to the G.I. Bill, to housing vouchers; they point to all the various so-called research which many of the researchers in the field agree, in fact, is almost non-existent. Almost all of these things, in fact, have almost no bearing on the dynamics or the makeup of the elementary and secondary school community. Some of them, in fact, are downright wrong.

From the State Department of Education in the State of Vermont, I get this—Vermont doesn't have a voucher program. What it does have is many very small districts that have too few schools to sustain a high school. Their scheme bears only a very distant relationship to an educational voucher system. Neither parents nor students receive a voucher in Vermont. Yet this is a program that is cited by the administration as justifying its voucher proposal.

Locally elected school boards operate schools or pay the tuition or all the tuition-receiving schools must be approved by and meet the standards of the State Board of Education in Vermont. In addition, none of the schools for which the so-called voucher can be used can be religiously affiliated in the State of Vermont.

Finally, though, and I think most critical for this legislation, is that its proponents have failed to answer important policy questions that this legislation will have to answer in order to find any legitimacy. How are the national educational goals rather than just individual choice goals going to be met under a voucher proposal? How would equity be assured under this voucher proposal, this co-called TEACH bill? How would overregulation of private schools by prevented? How will parental rights be guaranteed, particularly if there is a grievance against the private school that uses the vouchers? What of the rights and access of the handicapped? And what are the options, the public policy options, if this proposal doesn't work?

I can tell you a bit about how the Congress works, and so can Checker. If the piece of legislation doesn't work, they don't substitute a new piece, they get rid of it.

Finally, what and how does this legislation improve what we already have? I am afraid that the proponents of the legislation haven't anwered that question. They haven't told us why vouchers are better than our current system, and the onus is upon the proponents, not on the opponents, to do that or come up with amendments to improve it.

Vouchers, in fact, may offer some limited, small degree of choice for a small number of parents in some districts, a limited choice. But I worked with Chapter One for a long time; and I believe Chapter One doesn't offer limited choice; Chapter One offers choice for life. There rests its value, and tinkering with it with this kind of proposal is going to do a great deal of harm. I will conclude with that.

EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS FOR THE DISADVANTAGED

Robert L. Woodson

Every time I appear with Mike Casserly, he always get the juices flowing. I would like to suggest, Michael, regarding your hypothetical situation, that perhaps you have made the best case for why we need to extend choice through vouchers in the educational system enabling the child who qualifies for Chapter One for a year, and whose grades improve, to stay in the program until he graduates.

Let me just put the issue of choice as it affects disadvantaged youngsters in the proper perspective, by examining how we have traditionally dealt with poor people and how we continue to do so. It's been an accepted proposition on both sides of the political divide that when people are incapable of caring for themselves, then the responsibility rests with government. The only debate between left and right is how government should discharge that responsibility. People on the right seem to believe that it should devolve to the lowest level of government and people on the left seem to believe it should devolve from large bureaucracies down to the families.

So with this in mind, we have seen over the last 20 years the growth of the poverty industry in the United States. We have spent more than a trillion dollars—a 25-fold increase in Federal, state and local dollars that have been poured into the cities to aid the poor; yet, we are told today, 20 years later, that one-third of the black community is in danger of becoming a permanent underclass. What we have spawned is a class of professional experts, as one of the speakers pointed out, and they are very proficient at designing solutions for the poor. Unfortunately, most of this money, as well as most of the choice and options go to our middle class service providers. In New York City for example, $14.5 billion is spent every year to address the needs of that city's 1.4 million poor people, or one-fifth of its population. A study by the Community Service Society, a 100-year-old social services agency, found that in 1983, 74 cents of every service dollar went to the industry; and only 26 cents of each dollar was spent for rent, food, clothes and other items of personal choice. I think that many service providers including many public school teachers, could rally behind a slogan that said, "Thanks to you poor people, we are working."

The fact of the matter is we need to introduce more market-like approaches to service delivery for the poor, strategies that pass responsibility not only to the various levels of government but also that empower the poor. Too often monies that Congress and foundations earmark for the poor are converted into services that are parachuted into a poor community, but over which residents have little choice and often result in devastating consequences.

The result is a social service system fraught with perverse incentives for "maintaining" a group of people in the name of helping them. Change is critical.

In Chicago, Illinois, for example, of 25,500 of the minority children originally enrolled in the 9th grade only 9,500 graduated and only 2,000 of those who graduated could read at or above the 12th grade level.

I asked Mary Futrell this question in a recent television debate: "Teachers obviously know more about education than any other professional group, so why do 43 percent of public school teachers who live in Chicago send their children to private schools?"

In fact, nationally, public school teachers send their children to private schools in twice the number as the general population. In Michigan, 20 percent of all public school teachers send their children to private school, but only 10 percent of the general population does. In Chicago, an even higher percentage of black teachers send their children to private schools, so obviously those who are professionally trained, who know most about education as a professional group, are telling us something about what they are administering. In fact, private schools in Chicago have their parent-teacher conferences on public school holidays to accommodate the large numbers of public school teachers. These facts speak more profoundly to me than any statement about how compassionate public school teachers are about the poor.

In Hartford, Connecticut, this winter, because of the teachers' contracts, school could not open until 8:30 a.m. Most poor parents usually have to go to work by 8 o'clock, so with temperatures around 30 degrees, children stood outside, waiting for the public schools to open while the teachers were inside having coffee. Why? Not because this was in the students' or parents' interests, but because the teachers' contracts were negotiated without parents' having any input into that process.

Around the country, we see similar situations. It is my firm belief that poverty can be frustrating and dispiriting, but it does not make you stupid. Mike said something about the sham of choice in education—well, 60 percent of Black parents support education vouchers and choice. They support them because they want quality for their children.

There is, however, another positive aspect of choice that Mike didn't mention. Because vouchers would create a more market-like environment, parents could start their own schools the way hundreds of Black parents who were dissatisfied with public schools have done.

Wallie Simpson, sitting here, is one such founder of a neighborhood based alternative school. She is a former public school teacher who became dissatisfied, as Marva Collins did, because she extended herself beyond what her peers were doing. Marva Collins was met with violence from her public school counterparts because she dared to do something to improve education. She distorted the bell-shaped curve by teaching, and extending love and concern for children.

Thus, Marva Collins, Wallie Simpson, and others like them have started independent neighborhood schools that are within the financial reach of poor parents. Seventy percent of the parents whose children attend Mrs. Simpson's school, the Lower East Side International Community School, are single minority parents. Many students are cast-offs from the public school system, yet they graduate from the eighth grade fluent in two languages.

Some independent schools operate on about 60 percent or 70 percent of the public schools' per pupil expenditure. Indians on reservations are doing the same, taking their lives in their own hands and starting their own schools.

A voucherized education system would create a market-like environment to allow churches and individuals to operate schools so community children could be taught not only how to read and write but responsible behavior and values as well, which is often absent in public schools. It would allow, as Wallie Simpson's school does, medical school students to teach biology to fifth grade students, which is absolutely not allowed in public school systems. Teaching students in their native languages, allowing parents to participate more in their children's educations, and many other reasons certainly merit consideration of additional options in education.

Will vouchers guarantee outcomes? No. There are no guarantees. Are there risks involved? Yes. Is there any situation, any rule, any policy, any law that would totally eliminate risk? No. The real danger that we have in this country is accepting the status quo.

When I debated Mary Futrell, I asked her what options she proposes? What she said was that we needed more respect for teachers and smaller classes. While I certainly don't disagree, I believe that we need more for our students.

Most of my own family live in a working class neighborhood in West Philadelphia; my nephew had to drop out of school in the tenth grade because the school board shifted the boundaries, placing him one block beyond it. He had to go to another school, and when he went to the school, the vice-principal said in the first session with him, "I guess you know the gangs who control this school." My nephew said, "No, I don't, because I live outside the neighborhood." The vice-principal said, "Well, I don't know how you are going to make it in this school." His mother tried everything she could to counsel him, but inevitably he dropped out of school.

This single incident demonstrates the kind of choices that teachers and bureaucrats often arbitrarily make, but with which poor parents have to live and over which they have no control. It seems to me that to achieve educational equity, we have to get information to low-income parents, because successful participation in the U.S. system depends on parents, particularly those who are poor, having information.

Thus, the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise sponsored a series of town meetings in low-income Black communities around the Country to explain choice. We did something that the National Education Association (NEA) did not do. We presented the parents' point of view.

Therefore, I am pleased to participate in a forum where this point of view (choice) is predominant. I asked the NEA, since they were critical of the fact that we were having town meetings and not inviting them, if they were going to sponsor town meetings to bring the information about choice to poor parents? I said I'd be happy to participate in their forums, and I would be pleased to invite them to ours.

Why don't we debate these issues in public housing projects, for instance? Let's include low-income communities and see what poor people say and think about choice, instead of having lobbyists and other people in Washington discuss what is best for poor people. I challenge the NEA and those organizations who support the status quo to debate people like myself and others in low-income communities.

Let me end by just saying that what we have done historically with poor people is study their failures in order to determine how to develop their successes. I think this is an improper and incorrect thing to do.

We watched Bill Moyers' program, "The Vanishing Black Family," and read articles by Leon Dash, a Black reporter for *The Washington Post* who lived for a year in a low-income community of Washington, D.C., interviewed Black teenage mothers and reported what he found. Now a researcher at the University of Chicago has just received a generous grant from the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Foundation to send Ph.D. candidates into the Black community in Chicago to conduct a study. Why? To get data.

The only thing that we can learn from studying failure is how to create it. The only beneficiaries of this kind of inquiry will be those who receive Emmys, Pulitzers, and Ph.Ds. The poor parents who are studied will continue to live in those conditions.

At the National Center, we are concerned about developing solutions based on the capacities and successes of low-income communities and what poor people have done for themselves. Go into the independent Black schools, to find out what the quality of education is there. How are they motivating teachers? Why do some of those schools only accept students who are kicked out of the public school system, and yet teach those children and make them responsible citizens? We need to study these successes among low-income people, and try to explain them. Then we should determine what policy barriers there are to their achieving even more success, as well as what we can learn that can be applied elsewhere.

In conclusion, the most helpful thing I can emphasize about expanding choice is something one of the speakers said earlier. Choice promotes innovation, and innovation is something we need more than anything. When the computer was first introduced in the fifties, it was large, cumbersome, and therefore access was limited. There are two approaches we could have taken. One was to continue to support the computer monopoly and provide grants so that people could pay for their access to it, but that is not how the market operates. What we did was to promote innovation, research, and competition; and as a consequence of that competition, computers are today within the financial reach of most people in this country, and that is directly because of competition in the marketplace.

Did someone get injured in that process? Of course. The companies that owned the large computers did. There is always a winner and a loser in this situation. The question is what is the potential educational benefit of competition to the country? Concerning the public school systems, I say some of them are good, some are bad. The bad ones need to close down the way a poor business closes down when it doesn't perform. It's like a football team that loses every game every season—we wouldn't continue to raise the salary of the coach and give all the players bonuses. It wouldn't work in football, and I assure you it is not going to work in education.